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The Gift of
John M. Pinkerton
of Boston,
13 Oct., 1848.

Luther F. Bell.

MEMOIR

OF

LUTHER V BELL, M.D., LL.D.

PREPARED BY VOTE OF

The Massachusetts Historical Society.

BY

GEORGE E. ELLIS.

REPRINTED FROM THE "PROCEEDINGS."

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At a stated meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, held February 13, 1862, after the announcement of the death of Dr. Luther V Bell, and remarks by Rev. Dr. Ellis and Hon. Richard Frothingham, the following Resolution was unanimously adopted:—

Resolved, That the Massachusetts Historical Society have learned with deep regret the death of their esteemed and respected associate, Hon. Luther V Bell, while serving in the medical staff of the army of the United States; and that Rev. George E. Ellis, D.D., be requested to prepare the customary Memoir.

CHANDLER ROBBINS,

Recording Secretary.

MEMOIR

OF

LUTHER V BELL, M.D., LL.D.

LUTHER V BELL came of an honored parentage and a worthy ancestry. His immediate family, their kindred and associates, through several generations, were of a stock, which, while winning the bread of life by labor on the soil, contributes to society the healthful and vigorous element for all intellectual, professional, and public services. His ancestor in this country was John Bell, who was born in Ireland in 1678. The family were of the designation known among us as the "Scotch-Irish." They belonged to a colony which had migrated about the year 1612 from Argyleshire, in Scotland, to the city and neighborhood of Londonderry, the capital of the county of that name in the province of Ulster. The city was of ancient origin; and, after having suffered almost to its destruction in the early distractions and revolutions of the country, it had been rebuilt by a company of adventurers from London, in the reign of James I., who prefixed the name of their own capital to the original Derry. The emigration of Scotch Protestants to that locality had been encouraged by the liberal offer of land, extending over nearly the whole of the six northern counties, made by James I. to invite settlers, after the suppression of the Roman-Catholic rebellion in those regions. The natural animosity which sprang up between the new-comers and the old proprietors, led, thirty years after the emigration, to the rebellion in the reign of Charles I.

An addition was made, near the close of the seventeenth century, to the Scotch colony in Ireland, by families who sought refuge from the sword of Claverhouse, and whose descendants united with those of the earlier emigrants in seeking a new home in our land. During the time of Cromwell, the colony enjoyed a temporary prosperity; but the memorable "siege of Derry," in 1688 and 1689, has given to history one of the most heroic of its records, as an episode in the fearful strife which followed. Some of those with whom John Bell was associated in the emigration to this country had taken part in the defence of the city. So highly did King and Parliament appreciate their prowess, as to pass an act, exempting from taxation, throughout the British dominions, all who had, during the siege, borne arms in the city. The settlers in the New-Hampshire Londonderry shared the benefit of that act down to our own war of Independence, their farms being known as "exempt farms."*

To secure for themselves, as Presbyterians, fuller civil and religious privileges than they enjoyed under English monarchical and Episcopal rule in Ireland, the thoughts of several comparatively thriving families in the North of Ireland were turned towards this country. The arrangements for effecting their purpose were made early in 1718 by an agent whom they sent to Governor Shute, of Massachusetts; and we find the settlement in progress in Londonderry, N.H., in 1719.

John Bell, the great-grandfather of the subject of this Memoir, followed in the second company of emigrants. His name is found in a record of the distribution of lands, dated in 1720; which is supposed to have been the year of his arrival. Other lands were allotted to him in 1722 and afterwards. He was born in Ballymony, near Coleraine. He brought with him his wife (Elizabeth Todd) and children,

* See History of Londonderry, N.H., by Rev. Edward L. Parker. Boston, 1851.

and the means of making what was then regarded a comfortable start for existence in a wilderness. He shared with his townsmen the responsibilities of trust and office in the settlement; and died July 18, 1743, aged sixty-four years. His name descended to his youngest child, John Bell, born in Londonderry, Aug. 15, 1730. In this American scion of an Old-World stock were found the qualities needed for the stirring times in which he was himself to live, and for transmission to a posterity, which, like his own, has been called to service in the loftiest and most arduous tasks for the public. He was the father of two governors. He received the common education of the place and time, — the training of the home, the school, the church, and the circumstances of a frontier life. He lived on the homestead as a farmer; and married, Dec. 21, 1758, Mary Ann Gilmore, of the same Scotch-Irish stock as himself. At the age of forty-five, and then the parent of eight children, he found the Revolution opening upon him, and calling on him for service which he was ready to pay. With a strong, muscular frame, exceeding six feet in stature, and a stentorian voice, having been for twenty years the champion of the village wrestling-ring, he would still, notwithstanding his age and numerous family, have entered the ranks, had he not been needed in civil office. He was town-clerk, and a member of the Committee of Safety, when he was elected a member of the Provincial Congress which met at Exeter, Dec. 21, 1775; a body which, the next year, necessarily assumed the functions of independent government. He was frequently re-elected to the same representation. In 1776, he was appointed a muster-master; and, in 1780, colonel of the eighth regiment of militia. From 1786 to 1791, he was a senator under the new Constitution of the State. Besides being a Special Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, he, of course, bore the various trusts of moderator, selectman, justice of the peace, elder of the church, guardian and administrator. His fourth son, John,

born July 20, 1765, engaged in trade; represented Londonderry in the Legislature; removed to Chester, where he spent the remainder of his life; and was successively senator, councillor, Sheriff of Rockingham County, and Governor of the State in 1828. He died in March, 1836. He was one of a family of twelve children, only three of whom outlived their parents. The mother died in 1822, aged eighty-six; the father, in 1825, aged ninety-five. The fifth son of John Bell, 2d, — Samuel, the father of our present subject, — was born Feb. 9, 1770; sharing a common-school education in the winter, and the labors of his father's farm in the summer. His strong entreaties and his own efforts obtained for him the privilege of a college course. He graduated at Dartmouth in 1793; studied law with the Hon. Samuel Dana, of Amherst, N.H.; and was admitted to the bar in 1796, rising at once to distinction. He married in November, 1797, Mehitable Bowen Dana, daughter of his law-tutor. She died in August, 1810; leaving four sons and two daughters. He practised law at Francestown and at Amherst. Samuel Bell, besides being appointed Attorney-General of the State (which office he declined), was successively a member and speaker of the House of Representatives, a member and president of the Senate, and one of the five Executive Councillors. A temporary release from public duties being necessary on account of declining health, he regained his vigor by spending portions of several years in excursions on horseback. He was appointed an Associate Justice of the Superior Court on the re-organization of the State Judiciary in 1816, and discharged his duties with eminent ability till his election as Chief Magistrate of the State in 1819. He served as Governor four years, and then declined re-election. In 1822, and again in 1828, Governor Bell was chosen to the Senate of the United States, and retired from public life in 1835. He had married a second time, in 1826, Lucy Smith, daughter of Jonathan Smith, Esq., of Amherst, and niece of his first wife;

and died at the farm in Chester, to which he had retired, Dec. 23, 1850, in his eighty-first year. He received the degree of LL.D. from Bowdoin College in 1821.

Samuel Dana Bell, the eldest son of Governor Samuel Bell, and a graduate of Harvard College in 1816, is now Chief Justice of the State of New Hampshire.

John Bell, second son of the Governor, graduated at Union College in 1818, pursued the study of medicine in Boston and Paris, and attended medical lectures at Harvard and Bowdoin Colleges, from the latter of which he received the degree of M.D. in 1823. In that year he commenced the practice of his profession in New York; and, during the two years of his residence there, became one of the editors of "The Medical and Physical Journal." He was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the University of Vermont; but a disease of the lungs compelled him to seek a change of climate. After a temporary residence in Natchez, Miss., he removed to Louisiana; where he died in 1830, at the age of thirty.

Of two daughters of Governor Bell, the youngest died in infancy. The other, Mary Ann, married John Nesmith, Esq., afterwards Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts.

James, the third son of Governor Bell, graduated at Bowdoin College in 1822, studied law, was admitted to the bar in 1825, practised his profession in Exeter, was a senator of the United States, and died in 1857, aged fifty-three.

Governor Bell left four sons by his second wife. The youngest member of the family of his first wife, whose virtues and honors we have thus briefly recorded, was Luther V Bell, the subject of this Memoir.*

* In the commemorative tribute offered by the writer at the funeral of Dr. Bell in St. John's Church, Charlestown, Feb. 17, 1862, I spoke of him as Luther *Virgil* Bell; having been informed by a cousin of his that such was his name in full. His brother, Chief-Justice Bell, writes me, "Until I heard your eulogy of him, I had never heard him so called. *V* had been to us all a *letter* only." I have since been told by an intimate friend of Dr. Bell, that he once pleasantly affirmed that the *V* did not

He was born in Francestown, Hillsborough County, N.H., Dec. 20, 1806. The family was broken up by the death of his mother in August, 1810. The father moved to Chester, N.H., near the close of 1812. The two youngest sons, James and Luther, had been placed under the care of their grandparents in the native place of the father, Londonderry (now Derry); which was regarded as the home of the family until the removal of Governor Bell to Chester. Luther was fitted for college at the academies in Atkinson and Derry. His surviving brother writes to me, "He was a lovely boy,—kind-hearted, affectionate, generous, unselfish, eminently sincere and truthful, quick to learn, and of a very ready, retentive, and suggestive memory; and these traits have seemed to my partial eyes to mark his character through life, while years had developed in him great good sense and a sound judgment."

He entered Bowdoin College in 1819 under a disadvantage of youth, still lacking some months of thirteen years of age. Among his classmates were Governor Crosby and Senator Fessenden. Among his associates and intimate friends in contemporaneous classes were Hon. Franklin Pierce, now Ex-President of the United States, who, one year the junior in standing of young Bell, was also his chum; Prof. Stowe, of Andover; Nathaniel Hawthorne, the novelist; and Longfellow, the poet. The reverend President of Bowdoin informs me, that "the only entry which he finds against young Bell in the records of the college, during a period noted for dissipation, is a charge of twenty-five cents for playing at bowls in study-hours." Probably the slender student was perfectly willing to make that contribution to the college-funds for the

represent any word, but that, when quite a lad, he adopted it from a boyish fancy, "that he might show as many initials in his signature as other boys." For particulars relating to the genealogy of the Bell Family, I am indebted to the "History of Londonderry;" to "Sketches of Alumni of Dartmouth College," in the "New-Hampshire Repository," vol. i.; and to letters from Chief-Justice Bell, and J. M. Pinkerton, Esq., of Boston, brother-in-law of Dr. Bell.

sake of the benefit which his chest derived from the exercise; doubtless a full equivalent, especially if, as is altogether likely, he had a classmate to set up the pins. The mothers of Bell and Pierce were cousins, and their fathers had been close friends till the sharply drawn lines of political parties in 1828 disturbed many personal relations. There is a pleasant reminiscence, so honorably fragrant of college friendship, and so characteristic of the manliness and magnanimity of our subject, that it deserves mention, though by anticipation, here. Dr. Bell was known in this neighborhood as a very earnest Whig. As such, he was a delegate from the Middlesex District to the Convention at Baltimore in the exciting Presidential campaign of 1852; the Convention which, to the grievous disappointment of himself as of so many others, failed to nominate Daniel Webster, though it received their loyal acquiescence in its choice of General Scott. At a subsequent "ratification meeting" in Faneuil Hall, Dr. Bell appeared, with other delegates, as a speaker. General Pierce was at that time the candidate of the Democratic party; and in a campaign Memoir of him, just put in circulation, the friendly relations between him and Dr. Bell had been referred to, while the usual defamatory representations had been made on the opposing side to the extent of blackening his character as a man and a soldier. Dr. Bell had expressed his intention of vindicating his old chum from such slanders, in his proposed speech. In spite of the remonstrance of a partisan, that it was "enough for each side to praise its own men," he fulfilled his own generous purpose, and paid "a warm and earnest tribute to the generosity, magnanimity, and courage of his character from his youth upwards, which drew down the applause of the vast assemblage, — Whigs, Democrats, and Free-soilers." *

* From an excellent Memoir of Dr. Luther V Bell which appeared in the American Journal of Insanity in October, 1854, during the lifetime of the subject. (Utica, N.Y.)

To go back from this anticipation of an event in Dr. Bell's later life to the college relations of his youth. He graduated in 1823. He at once commenced the study of medicine with his brother John, then in New York; afterwards attended medical lectures at Hanover; and received his professional degree, Sept. 26, 1826, before he was twenty years of age. He returned to New York; and, while seeking for occupation in his chosen profession as soon as he should pass his maturity, he engaged temporarily in mercantile business in connection with his brother-in-law, Mr. Nesmith. Mrs. Nesmith, being, like so many of the family, a victim of pulmonary disease, was advised to undertake a sea-voyage. Her brother Luther accompanied her to St. Augustine, Fla., where her life closed. On his return, he yielded to the solicitations of his friends that he should pursue the practice of his profession in the neighborhood of his early home. He commenced that service at Derry in 1831, and continued in it till called to the charge of the M'Lean Asylum in 1837. He married, Sept. 1, 1834, Frances Clark Pinkerton, daughter of James Pinkerton, Esq., of Derry.

During the six years of his professional service in New Hampshire he won esteem and obtained eminence for his devotion, fidelity, and skill; for that affectionate sympathy with sufferers which was so conspicuous a trait and so felicitous a qualification in his subsequent career of arduous labor; and for that earnest spirit of investigation and philosophic research which made him a genius in his chosen work.

The recent death of his brother, Dr. John Bell, and of his only sister, Mrs. Nesmith, had so reduced the family circle, as to make it doubly grateful to him and to his kindred that he could be near his surviving parent. The change of the habits and facilities of professional life to which he had been addicting himself, in our largest capital, to the exigencies of his new position as a "country doctor," must have been fully

realized by him; but his principles and qualities of character would bring him into easy conformity with the necessities of the case. His long rides over hilly highways and by-roads, in heat and cold and storm, by night and day, might balance their effects of danger or benefit on his constitutional tendencies. The sparsity and distance of professional brethren, whose counsel he might seek in cases of perplexity, would throw him more confidently on his own resources. As an agricultural population has its full share of fractures, maimings, dislocations, and other inflictions requiring surgical skill, the country doctor must be equally competent for the two chief branches of his profession, which in a city may engage the peculiar talent of two classes of practitioners. A signal instance of Dr. Bell's skill, and fertility of resource, is kept in vivid remembrance where it was exhibited. The scene was a country farm-house, several miles from his own home, and twenty miles from Lowell, — the nearest place at which the proper requisites for the occasion could have been obtained. The patient was a corpulent, elderly, and intemperate farmer, whose lower limb required amputation, having been crushed in a rocky rut by a heavy load passing over it. The first re-action of the system had taken place; the delay of a few hours would be fatal: at once, or never, was the condition of the operation. The reputation of the young doctor and the life of the old patient were both at stake, however differently their value might have been estimated. Dr. Bell, without a moment to lose, extemporized his instruments from the scanty resources of the farm-house. The patient's old razor well strapped, an antique tenon-saw freshly filed, and a darning-needle, with the temper taken out of it to admit of its being bent, as a *tenaculum*, served for the emergency. An inexperienced assistant had the place for his pressure on the artery indicated by a stain which the doctor had made with ink on the groin. The patient, thus beautifully dealt by, lived many years; and the last report of him was as a working bricklayer,

topping out a tall chimney, supported by a wooden leg carved out for him by the skill of the hand which had relieved him of his damaged member.

In the year 1834, Dr. Bell was a successful competitor for the Boylston Medical Prize. His dissertation examined and opposed the theory of vegetarian diet, as revived under the advocacy of Dr. Sylvester Graham; and argued that a far more substantial nutriment was adapted to the New-England stomach.

In the year following, he wrote a dissertation on the "External Exploration of Diseases," with principal reference to the modern diagnosis of diseases of the chest. It was published by the Massachusetts Medical Society, and occupies a portion of the ninth volume of the Library of Practical Medicine. Dr. Bell's third contribution to the literature of his profession was "An Attempt to investigate some Obscure and Undecided Doctrines in Relation to Small-pox and Varioliform Diseases." This essay will always be historically valuable. Its interest comes from its relation of experience gathered under peculiar local circumstances. Variolous diseases, ravaging regions unprotected by inoculation, caused an intense panic over the wide neighborhood in which Dr. Bell had become known. He relates some very curious particulars of a sporadic case, as well as of infected and epidemic places and conditions.

The attention of many public-spirited and philanthropic persons in his native State had been turned most earnestly to the demand for some public provision for the insane; and Governor Dinsmoor, in his message, June, 1832, had introduced the subject; as did also Governor Badger in 1834, and Governor Hill in 1836. The institution then in such successful working in Worcester, Mass., with the wide dissemination of the frightful sufferings and abuses which the preliminary efforts for its establishment had exposed, engaged a like zeal in our border Commonwealth. General Peaslee, Hon. Frank-

lin Pierce, Samuel E. Coues, Charles J. Fox, and others, were the devoted champions of this cause. They encountered much popular indifference, and even opposition; in part to be accounted to actual ignorance of the extent and misery of that class of maladies whose victims were hidden away or treated as only the evil spirits, who were once believed to possess them, might righteously be dealt by. But the arts of demagogues and of croakers, who foreboded intolerable public burdens from "fancy-philanthropy," were also used with great success to withstand for a long time, and greatly to embarrass, the generous efforts of the humane. Dr. Bell, engaging with all his heart in these efforts, allowed himself to be sent as the representative of his town to the General Court, for the sole and simple purpose of furthering the object. He was placed on a Special Committee to report on the subject of the number and condition of the insane in the State, and the means of providing for them. The report, which, by particular request, was drawn up by him, was printed for distribution by the Legislature, and reprinted in the Journals of both Houses. He proposed the establishment of an institution, the cost of which terrified the representatives of the people, as involving an immediate outlay equal to half the annual expenses of the State Government. The General Court transferred the decision of the great question to a popular vote by the constituency.* Dr. Bell most laboriously followed up the advocacy of his project by writing a series of articles in the leading papers, and by delivering public addresses in various places. Circulars were addressed to proper persons in every town and village in the State, for the sake of obtaining accurate and exhaustive statistics and accounts of every existing case of

* The question to be voted on was, "Is it expedient for the State to grant an appropriation to build an Insane Hospital?" — See "Reports of the Board of Visitors, &c., of the New-Hampshire Asylum for the Insane, June Session, 1862," for a detailed account of the persistency and the obstinacy of the respective parties in the legislation for this establishment. Less than one-half of the legal voters cast ballots, and these were about equally divided on the proposition.

insanity; an eminently noble and satisfactory enterprise, in a State then containing 300,000 widely distributed inhabitants. A final and full reward was realized, after six years of agitation, in the establishment of the New-Hampshire Asylum for the Insane in 1838; the edifice being erected in Concord in 1842.

The published essays of Dr. Bell had given him fame, and his devoted labors in the cause just recognized had drawn attention to him as qualified for a special service. It was while he was attending a second session of his membership in the Legislature,* that, without any agency of his own, and quite to his own surprise, he was invited to become the Superintendent of the M'Lean Asylum for the Insane, then in that part of Charlestown which has since been set off as Somerville. This institution was, and is, a branch of the Massachusetts General Hospital. It was Dr. Bell's peculiar felicity, in assuming his most arduous trust, that he received his appointment to it, and all along obtained the most generous, cordial, and intelligent co-operation, from that select body of high-minded, highly cultivated men who administer this noble agency of benevolence. As the parent institution has had its treasury enriched by the lavish bequests of the merchant princes and the munificent Christian women of Boston, and its

* When expressing to the writer, in grateful terms, his high appreciation of his membership of the Massachusetts Historical Society, at the time of his election, Dr. Bell remarked, in a humorous way, that he might venture to compare claims with some fellow-members on the score that he had once been instrumental in saving from destruction a large mass of public documents of value of the State of New Hampshire. I cannot recall, if he then specified them, the particulars of this good service. It was doubtless performed while he was in the Legislature. The Hon. W. H. Y. Hackett, President of the New-Hampshire Historical Society, has kindly aided me in an attempt to discover the facts of the case by sending me a series of extracts from the Legislative Records. It appears from these, that Governor Hill, in his message of Nov. 23, 1836, called attention to the scattered, exposed, and imperfect files of the State documents; that the subject was referred to a Committee, of which Dr. Bell was a member; that, on Dec. 29, he made a report embracing a resolution (nominating John Farmer, Esq., to gather and arrange the public papers, &c.), and that this resolution passed. While serving on this Committee, our late associate probably found opportunity to save some precious documents.

offshoot has equally shared in the splendid charities of that class of our citizens who have given a world-wide honor to our capital; so, in the oversight and management of Hospital and Asylum, our selected gentlemen have most devotedly engaged their heartiest zeal. It would have made an incalculable difference, not only with the comfort but with the success of Dr. Bell, in the score of years of his intercourse and responsibility, had he been in any wise subjected to dependence upon incompetent or narrow-minded men. The class of gentlemen who were elected Trustees of the Hospital, and the terms and method of their service, — by routine visitation, — made his position eminently favorable for the trial of the experiments, and the testing of the measures, by which the Asylum, from simply empirical and tentative principles, has been developed to a scientific management confessedly unsurpassed over the world. Dr. Bell, in his Annual Reports to these trustees, seemed to take a hearty pleasure, beyond all formal recognition, in acknowledging the sympathetic relations which engaged them with entire mutual respect and confidence in their exacting duties. He was wont to do this even more warmly in private and friendly conference outside the circle of the trustees. After he had resigned his office, he looked back gratefully upon his intercourse with them; and used to refer his satisfactory conduct of the institution to the fact, that, instead of having been annoyed or thwarted by any petty dictation or niggardly restrictions, he had found, in those to whom he was to give and from whom he was to receive advice, a company of high-toned and large-hearted men. The name of "William Appleton," which he gave to one of his children, was his tribute to one so long the President, and a munificent benefactor, of the Asylum.

The M'Lean Asylum, the earliest institution for the insane in the northern part of our country, and ever since acknowledged to be without a superior, had a history of nineteen years when Dr. Bell assumed the charge of it. His honored

predecessors, Drs. Wyman and Lee, had served it most faithfully. At his accession, it had but seventy patients. It was laboring under many disadvantages, which only the most persevering pains and zeal could remove. Its humane objects, though of so exigent and manifest a need, were very imperfectly apprehended or estimated. Blind prejudice, stolid indifference, hardened tolerance of abuses, and hopelessness of any great good to be accomplished for them, characterized the general feelings of our communities towards the victims of mental disease. And, strange to say, the well-meant and most essential conditions required in the wise and really merciful conduct of the institutions provided for their benefit called out severe reproach, and often even the foulest obloquy, upon their devoted managers. The natural friends of patients were, in some cases, the worst offenders of this sort. The simple truth is, that the science of this arduous and often baffling ministration was yet to be acquired. Ignorance, whose errors and blunders were not relieved by any amount of good intention, had first obtained the field. Empiricism, routine, legalized errors, traditional maxims, and ill-chosen authorities, were the next possessors and stragglers over it. The history of philanthropic and scientific inquiry and effort, in reference to the treatment of the insane, forms one of the most interesting episodes in the annals of humanity. The antagonism between the advocates of private and public institutions for the purpose was very intense; as it was found, that, in the main, they represented, respectively, two very different theories as to the wisest way of dealing with such sufferers. As we read, at this day, some of the publications issued by the disputants in that controversy, we are rather impressed with a sense of the deficiencies and errors of knowledge and opinion in both parties, than with the feeling that the weight of demonstrative argument lay on the side of either of them. The necessities of the case, however, carried the decision in favor

of very energetic and liberal public provision by legislation for the establishment and oversight of Insane Asylums. But so far as my own inquiries, extended yet not exhaustive, enable me to make an assertion in a matter covering so much ground, I will venture to affirm, that, with the exception of the asylums founded by the State of Massachusetts, at Worcester, Taunton, and Northampton, that in the city of Boston, and perhaps as many more in other States through the Union, private munificence has contributed far more than the public treasury to the establishing and endowment of all our existing institutions for the treatment of the insane.

The death of the excellent and devoted Dr. Lee, after a short superintendency of the M'Lean Asylum, had subjected the trustees to a very serious exercise of their responsibility in the appointment of a successor. They felt that they needed just such a man as Dr. Bell proved to be, — constitutionally and naturally endowed with the special qualities, and trained to the exercise and culture of those special capacities of mind, which would adapt him to his work; and then engaged by a lofty and most conscientious sense of duty, amounting almost to fearfulness in its weight and burden. His deliberation and calmness and poise of judgment secured him most thoroughly from any excess of mere enthusiasm; though the concentration and intensity of his interest in all the phases of the disease to which he ministered had in it the finest elements of enthusiasm. His sympathies were warm, deep, tender, but manifested, as they needed to be, under the restraints of a cautious discretion. He harmonized in his development and self-education those speculative and practical talents which so wonderfully adapted him to his new tasks of study and experiment. Even the cast of his features, the tones of his voice, the gentleness, courtesy, and dignity of his manners, would of themselves have suggested his fitness as a candidate for his trust, as in the discharge of it they did eminently and most graciously prove the wisdom

of his appointment, and win him signal success in it. How many sufferers, recovered under his care, have delighted in yielding themselves to grateful and ardent acknowledgments of the personal comfort and assurance which they derived, even under the excitements and fancies of their disease, from his "manners and ways," his looks and mild words, his quiet but searching eye, his wise sympathy!

Having had frequent occasions, during the period of Dr. Bell's official charge, to visit the institution and to confer with him, I never left it without feeling anew the deepening impression, that nature and grace had given him a most felicitous endowment for a service in which a single strongly marked personal deficiency would have neutralized many other positive qualifications. One incident illustrative of this remark is so strongly and affectingly impressed upon my memory, that I will yield to the impulse to record it. As I approached the entrance-door of the Asylum, on an occasion which called me there, a carriage drew up, from which issued the most distressing and heart-piercing screams, as of one in the intensest agony of body and mind. Three men, friendly, but not professional, attendants, had alighted from the carriage; thus wholly disabling themselves from any power of control over their charge, whom they left in it. That charge was a woman suffering from extreme mania. She thought herself surrounded by flames, and blazing in torture. She threw herself wildly about in the carriage, lacerating herself with the broken glass, beating her dress as if to extinguish the fire, and screaming most piteously for "water! water!" Surrounded by a group of paralyzed observers, who knew not what it was wise or safe to do, the sufferer was left to herself for a few minutes that seemed hours. Dr. Bell, summoned from some inner apartment, appeared, to give us all sweet relief; for we felt that we shared it with the patient. He approached the door of the carriage, fixed his gentle eye upon her, and, with mild tones of ordinary speech, said,

"Madam, come with me, and you shall have water." The evil spirit seemed to have gone out of her at the look and word. She smiled pleasantly, took the proffered arm, and passed into the Asylum as if bent on a stroll through its beautiful gardens.

Dr. Bell, having been chosen to his joint office of physician and superintendent of the Asylum in December, 1836, assumed the charge at the opening of the new year; adopting, of course, the moral and medical system then accepted as the result of the experience of his predecessors. This he wisely made the basis, as they would have done, for such improvements as further experience should warrant. He at once identified his heart, mind, and every hope of honorable fame, with entire devotion to the institution. He had not served many years, however, before he found it essential to the healthfulness, cheerfulness, and vigor of his own frame and thoughts, while exposed to so many morbid and exhausting influences, to keep open some channel of intercourse with the outside world, and to interest himself in some wider converse with human improvement.

I have before me a solid volume, arranged by himself, containing, besides other matters, his own copy of his successive Annual Reports to the Trustees, beginning with the first, which bears date Jan. 1, 1838; that being the twentieth offered of the institution. I had read most of these documents, as, from time to time, he had put them into my hands; and supposed I had a general apprehension of their contents. But while engaged upon this tribute to his memory, and holding his own book before me, I have found myself deliberately reading in their order, and with abundant recompense, the whole series of his reports. And they belong together: they ought to be brought and kept together wherever they are to be found; for they present the professional, and, in good part, the personal history of an eminent public servant and scientific man, as well as the history of many of the most

important stages of progress in one of the most humane of all sciences. Competent as he was to undertake his office, he felt that he received it with most exacting demands upon him, a full and cheerful compliance with which alone could qualify him for it. Easily adapting himself to the conditions of residence, and of daily and almost hourly intercourse with his patients, he conscientiously denied himself, for many years, all the relaxations and privileges of society which were so temptingly within his reach in the neighboring capital. He gave his great powers and his signal aptitudes of mind to philosophical observation and practical experiment upon all the facts and phenomena of mental disease. While it was of the very essence of his good sense, and clearness of understanding, to look hopefully for help and light towards improved methods and more correct views of the subject of his study, and while he most generously accepted the least contribution to any real advance in it, he was too cautious and well balanced in judgment either to invent any crotchets or fancies of his own, or to be influenced by those of others. The opportunity and the duty seemed equally to press and keep themselves before him, that he was to construct a science out of well-observed facts and phenomena for his own guidance, and to reduce its principles to practical trial; thereby testing and rectifying it. He gathered documentary materials and statistics from all accessible quarters. He found more to question, to doubt about, and to subject to rigid examination, than he did to approve or blindly follow, in the accepted theories and methods of treatment of insanity. As for the statistics of asylums from which were deduced the conclusions confided in, as he thought, too readily, by some of his professional brethren, the reader of his reports will be profoundly impressed with the shrewdness and sagacity with which he challenges their value, and indicates their utterly misleading influence when they fail in exhaustiveness of detail, in com-

prehensiveness of conditions, or complete and exact parallelism of circumstances.

In reading Dr. Bell's reports in their series, we note how he himself grew to the standard of true science, — how he felt and inquired his way on with equal caution and confidence. He invites the trustees and alternating visitors to weigh the value and to interpret the significance of the facts which he authenticates for them, as rectifying errors, or suggesting improvements, or favoring the trial of wise experiments, for the better conduct of the institution. He commits himself confidingly to their support in the adoption of any measure or regulation which withstood prejudice, or was likely to offend that watchful but not always wise class of persons, the friends of patients and the critical public. One of the most striking and grateful impressions derived from the perusal of these documents suggests itself from the relation in which Dr. Bell placed himself with all who, within the walls, shared with him in the anxious responsibilities of the daily conduct of the Asylum. Cordial tributes to them appear in all his reports. But these were not formal recognitions of perfunctory services. Far otherwise. Most of those who ministered there in any capacity had felt the influence of his mind, and were trained by his help to the prudence, fidelity, gentleness, and devotion so essential to their charge. A large number of attendants is there requisite, with an exact division of the duties of subordinates and helpers, and strict fidelity in obeying regulations. The institution was most fortunate, and its superintendent was enviably favored, in the characters and qualities of those on whom he needed to rely for co-operation. It would be wrong to omit, from a tribute to Dr. Bell himself, all mention of the names of some of those with whom he shared so much helpful and happy intercourse. His first assistant, Dr. Fox, had resigned, much to his regret. His assistant and successor, Dr. Booth, so soon snatched away

from the office for which he was so admirably qualified and trained, had Dr. Bell's entire confidence and love. Mr. Tyler, the steward, and his wife, the honored matron, had both of them, by long years of service (still happily continued), by their genial manners, their zeal, fidelity, and experience, been recognized as ornaments and securities for the well-managed economies of the Asylum. And what shall we say of the excellent and devoted Miss Relief R. Barber, — the angel of light and peace, the sweet and patient and self-denying ministrant of love and trust to hundreds of female patients? I will crave the liberty to express as of my own opinion, from observation and the heart-eloquent testimony of many whom she has soothed and saved, — what I believe was literally the opinion of Dr. Bell, — that she is an especial provision of the Divine Love and Wisdom for an especial service. Her Christian name was prophetically chosen.

The subjects to which Dr. Bell applied himself with chief interest were successively pressed upon his attention as he penetrated deeper into the materials for wise theory, and watched cautiously the trial-tests of experiment, in the treatment of the various forms and degrees of mental disease. Its causes and agencies, direct and indirect, constitutional and incidental, inherited or original; conditions of treatment as depending upon stages of disease, — its aggravations, change of surroundings, the withdrawal of previous influences, and the substitution of new influences; the classification of patients, — to what extent possible and essential; its effect upon the comfort of the patients, and as an aid to their recovery; the use of physical restraints, — the question as to the possibility of absolutely dispensing with them; the exposure of the uncandid and deceptive pretence, that, in some foreign institutions, such restraints had been wholly disused, when searching inquiry proved that there was equivocation about what really was signified by restraints; the provision of relaxations and amusements, of opportunities and materials

for manual labor, for garden and field work, for reading and for religious exercises; the extent to which these appliances might wisely be availed of, and their influence upon patients; the internal discipline of the institution, — its regulations respecting attendants, and the intercourse by visits or correspondence between patients and their friends; arrangements for heating and ventilation, to secure the best conditions for physical health or comfort; the addition of new and commodious edifices for the sake of offering elegancies and luxuries to a class of patients whose habits and education had made such indulgences essential to them, and whose means would afford a proportionate compensation; careful revisions and rectifications of the statistics published by other institutions of like design, for the purpose of securing more accuracy in estimating comparative results and comparative methods, — these, and a multitude of incidental and subordinate topics, will be found to engage the well-rewarded attention even of an unprofessional reader, as he follows the progress of Dr. Bell, identical, in many respects, with the progress of science in a department of most melancholy but humane interest.

It has been already intimated, that, after a few years of entire absorption and concentration of time and thought in the care of the Asylum, Dr. Bell found some variation and enlargement of his mental occupation essential to him. There offers here a convenient opportunity for rehearsing some of his incidental employments and interests during the term of his service. These, however, for the most part, were strictly of a professional character. In 1840, he went abroad, by permission of the trustees, for four months, for the sake of health, and in order to gather information about foreign asylums. His report the next year is of very great interest, relating his observations on the structure and arrangements of insane hospitals, recent improvements introduced in them and in their management, the abuses of the "private madhouse"

system, the employment and the nature of the physical restraints still practised, &c.

In 1845, the Trustees of the projected Butler Institution for the Insane, at Providence, R.I., wishing to avail themselves of his helpful services, and under the most favorable circumstances, asked of the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital leave for Dr. Bell to repeat his foreign visit on their behalf. Permission being granted, he undertook a wintry voyage; sailing from New York, Jan. 2, 1846, and spending two most diligent months in Europe. On his return, he addressed a letter from Sandy Hook to the Butler Trustees, that he was ready to give an account of his mission. His report, or rather an abstract of it, with plans and diagrams, especially full in reference to ventilation, was published; and his suggestions were largely followed in the new edifices.

In 1848, Dr. Bell delivered the discourse before the Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Medical Society, choosing for his subject that on which he was then so earnestly engaged, the "Practical Methods of ventilating Buildings;" which was published by the society, and also separately, with a valuable appendix. In 1857, the high compliment was paid him of an election as president of that society. He is regarded as a highly authoritative, though, of course, not an infallible expert on the structure, the warming and ventilating, of large edifices. Chief-Justice Bell writes me, "I remember to have heard him mention that he received a prize of a hundred guineas from the authorities of one of the West-India islands for the plan of a hospital edifice." On Aug. 13, 1850, Dr. Bell delivered a eulogy on President Taylor before the city authorities and people of Cambridge, which is in print.

Deferring a reference to his participation in the affairs of party politics, his strictly official employments call us back to his annual reports. The number of patients in the Asylum steadily increased, till the capacity of the spacious edifices, even though enlarged and made more commodious, interposed

a limit. This fact was all the more significant of the admirable administration within the walls, when we remember, that, during the years we are reviewing, new asylums were established and old ones were extended over localities which had previously depended upon that in Somerville. It is observable, likewise, that public and private confidence was more heartily yielded to the institution, notwithstanding an increasing strictness in some parts of its discipline, and a decided position taken by its trustees on some points where popular prejudice still had sway. In the first year of Dr. Bell's superintendency, he had under his care 191 patients; in 1838, he had 224; in 1840, he had 263; in 1842, he had 271; in 1844, he had 292. The largest number given for any one year is that for 1851, when there were 364 patients. During his whole term of service, he had had 2,696; of which number, sixty-two per cent had recovered. In his report for 1841, he recognizes the increasing interest then manifested in various parts of the country in provision for the insane and in the science of the subject. He dwells upon the necessity of close personal attention and acute observation, instead of relying on theory or tradition. In the report for 1842, he pays a fine tribute to the virtues and the professional qualities of the first incumbent of his office, Dr. Rufus Wyman, then recently deceased. In the next report, Dr. Bell gives a cursory review of his seven years' experience, and introduces some very important hints upon the urgent necessity of a revision of the jurisprudence of insanity, with particular reference to English legislation on the subject. In his report for 1844, he refers to the provision which the Legislature had made in its last session for a Board of Commissioners for investigating the mental condition of convicts suspected of insanity. Of this commission he was afterwards a member, and performed in it some special service. He also makes mention of a newly formed "Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane." Of this association he was for five years the pre-

sident, and always the leading spirit. At its first annual meeting after the decease of Dr. Bell, a discourse on his life and character was read in Providence, R.I., June 10, 1862, by his friend Dr. Ray, of the Butler Asylum. This discourse, which is now in print, is a most just, eloquent, and appreciative tribute from one who was best qualified to render it. Dr. Bell read before this association, in 1849, a paper, which those competent to judge regard as indicating powers of most acute original investigation and scientific skill, given to a subject that would baffle ordinary powers. His theme was, "On a form of disease resembling some advanced stages of mania and fever, but so contradistinguished from any ordinarily observed or described combination of symptoms as to render it probable that it may be an overlooked and hitherto unrecorded malady;" published in the "Journal of Insanity," vol. ii. This form of disease has since been known as "Bell's Disease." In Dr. Bell's report for 1845, we find his deliberate opinion, "that in this country the type of insanity is much more intense than in Europe." Some special suggestion or theme of interest will be found in each one of his reports, giving to it a value of its own, and helping towards the cumulative observations and experience which have won for their author the place of eminence and distinction in his professional service. His fellow-townsmen in Somerville regarded him as their most distinguished citizen; and in that relation his advice and aid were often sought in private ways, while it furnished the occasion and opportunity for some of his interminglings with political issues. Among the pamphlets from his own pen which he left bound together, I find two reports prepared by him as Chairman of the School Committee for the years 1845–6 and 1846–7. In the same volume appears, as a "city document," a letter addressed by him, in answer to inquiries, to the Mayor of Boston, in 1845, on the construction, warming, and ventilation of the proposed new City Prison.

Dr. Bell's name and reputation have been widely and

closely, and to a great extent erroneously, associated with what goes by the name of "Spiritualism." Very many persons have adopted the impression, that he was a "believer" in it; and several of his friends have expressed regrets that he afforded so much countenance to it as to be willing to be quoted for his known interest in it, and his patient devotion of so much valuable time to its investigation. Having very frequently and very deliberately discussed the subject with him, and been his companion — not without a measure of shamefacedness on the part of both of us, though in other good company — to the "sittings" and exhibitions of "mediums," the writer feels himself entitled and under obligation to speak with some confidence on this incidental topic, and on Dr. Bell's true position in reference to it. With full assurance, then, it may be affirmed, that Dr. Bell showed no further and no different interest in "Spiritualism" than the facts and the phenomena which it presented before this community not only warranted, but demanded of one in his professional position, and especially of one who had such a remarkable aptitude and skill for the inquisition as he possessed. And, further, it may as confidently be affirmed, that so far from indorsing the claims of any thing preternatural, miraculous, or even immaterial, in the phenomena, such as involved the supposed agency of beings or powers from "the other world," Dr. Bell, from first to last, positively and emphatically, in his speech and in what he has left in writing by his own hand, utterly discredited all such claims, as wholly unsupported. The simple fact that so many people, — as, at one time alleged, three millions in our own country, — embracing, too, all classes and grades, were interested in "Spiritualism," was one more likely to engage his inquisitive curiosity than any of the mere phenomena which were adduced as accounting for it. His natural and professional tastes for psychological investigations would attract him to it. The intelligent part of the community would look to him as under a peculiar obligation, as well

as opportunely qualified, to investigate the subject, exposing the delusions and frauds connected with it, and instructing them by his own opinion as to whether any occult or unrecognized or newly developed agency was disclosed in its workings. He opened the subject twice before the Association of Medical Superintendents of Insane Asylums, and indicated the claims of the community on those especially qualified to investigate the alleged phenomena. He himself thought that the delusion or excitement had been unwisely dealt by, — unwisely, that is, considering the obligations which intelligent and cautious persons owe to the weak, the credulous, the excitable, and the unsuspecting, who are the victims of the designing; unwisely, too, as regards the ends of true and pure science. He found thousands around him, including several worthy personal friends and neighbours, in a fervor of excitement and sympathy about a supposed new channel of communication opened with another world. Neither the fanatical nor the ludicrous aspects of the phenomena were so interesting to him as were the simply psychological elements of the subject. He might have thought it, on the whole, a good thing, that those who had lost faith, or ardor or living experience of faith, in the solemn sanctities and the august secrecies of things spiritual and divine, should have their sluggish or clouded apprehensions vivified by any semblances which would represent such realities. If spirits are not entertained as angel visitants in the heart through their own tongues and tones of converse, better is it, than that they should not come at all, that they should be believed to play antics with household chairs and tables, and spell out names by a child's alphabet, and convince in any way that the dead are alive. But while Dr. Bell took note of the astounding sweep and extent of the excitement about "Spiritualism," and had patients brought to him crazed by its agency, he regretted that it was left, in the main, to be treated with blank indifference or with sarcasm by another class of the

community, instead of receiving a rigidly critical and scientific investigation by the multiplied tests available for the purpose. He was himself a deeply and devoutly religious man, holding views more in sympathy with those of the Friends than of any other class of Christians. His tone, and cast of feeling, were, in the finest sense of the term, spiritual. He had a profound respect and a most catholic charity for all the workings of the sentiment of religion and all its manifestations in others. He argued, that, if the delusion of witchcraft had been subjected to the inquisition of even the imperfect science and philosophy of the age of its prevalence, thousands of lives would have been spared, and millions of hearts would have escaped the rack of intense suffering. The persistency with which Dr. Bell pleaded for and engaged himself in an examination of the phenomena of *belief*, as well as of the phenomena which were the *grounds* of the belief, in "Spiritualism," was mistaken by many for a credence of it. It chanced that at each of several "sittings" in a circle with a "medium," at which the writer was present with Dr. Bell, the spirits alleged to be offering a communication assumed the names of deceased members of his family, and sought conference with him. Touched and tender affections, without a ray of confidence in their agency in the scene, would explain the emotion which he manifested. So far as he reached, and felt disposed to give shape or definiteness to, any conclusion from his continued and numerous examinations of the phenomena of the subject, there are abundant means for fixing his position in reference to it. Utterly discrediting, and positively repudiating, as before affirmed, all the supernaturalism or real spirituality of the phenomena, and knowing full well that the mixture of fraud, chicanery, artifice, and collusion, connected with them, would justify even legal proceedings against some of the adepts, he did recognize in many cases the proved agency of some mechanical or material or occult principle not yet brought under the terms of science. He thought he

had reason to acknowledge the possible existence and the working energy of some mesmeric or other force, by which one person might be told of something *already known to him*, by another man or woman who was supposed not to have gained the information in the ordinary way. This was the extent of Dr. Bell's indorsement of "Spiritualism."

Another service in which Dr. Bell turned his talents and professional acquisitions to important uses, for the benefit of individuals and for the security of public interests, was as an expert in his science before courts of justice. It was somewhat remarkable, that during the years of his fullest experience in the Asylum, and those which immediately followed his resignation, a number of very striking cases, involving principles of the jurisprudence of insanity, presented themselves in the region over which his reputation was established. There were also circumstances of peculiar complication and embarrassment under which professional skill was called into exercise in some of these cases. One of the many forms of philanthropic zeal in our community engaged itself in behalf of prisoners and criminals. In the view of a sterner and less sentimental class of observers of this possibly exaggerated tenderness for convicts, the real safety and the rights of the public were perilled by this form of philanthropy. Felons were likely to be dealt with too leniently, if not even to be pitied as the victims of misfortune and of malignant social usages. Pleas were advanced, that quite a large *percentage* of what was punished as crime was referable to causes identical with those which produce insanity; and that probably quite a number of the sentenced convicts in all our prisons ought, by humane principles, to be transferred to asylums. No doubt, there was a basis of truth in these pleas; and there is as little doubt that they were exaggerated and overplied. Of course, the reasonable apprehensions, as well as the jealousy and the ridicule, of the conservative portion of the community, were engaged against the so-called sentimentalists on this sub-

ject; and the opposition was, in its turn, in danger of running to excess. It was under such circumstances, intensifying the inherent difficulties of the service, that Dr. Bell was frequently summoned to the cell and to the court-room to examine convicts and to testify before juries. There were cunning culprits who undertook to simulate insanity. There were convicts who neither raised the plea themselves, nor had friends to raise it for them, who yet were entitled to the benefit of it, at least to the extent of a professional inquisition in reference to it. It required often rare and well-trained qualities in a professed expert to meet the demands of some special cases, and to stand the ordeal of judges, counsel, and jury, in the court. Very nice learning, very acute discrimination, cool self-possession, and a command of all his professional skill, were needed in the witness; and, even with all these qualifications and guaranties of his testimony, only one who felt sure of his ground would be a match for the subtleties which a purchased or interested advocacy might ply against him. As if to give us a new illustration of the compensatory methods of Providence, legal processes, turning upon the question of the lack of wits or mental soundness of one person, have been the occasion of proving a marvellous amount of intellectual furniture in several other persons.

Dr. Bell secured high distinction and entire confidence in himself, and gradually vindicated the application of rigid scientific principles to this branch of jurisprudence. In connection with his commissionership for the transfer of feeble-minded or irresponsible persons confined in prisons to the public hospitals, his appearance as an expert in the courts gave him an official as well as an eminent professional reputation. He drew attention to the very different methods and tests relied upon in the English courts, and sought to reduce judicial proceedings on the subject to some degree of harmony. He was well aware of the perplexities and risks attendant upon the judicious and faithful use of the confidence reposed

in him by individuals and by the community. The plea of insanity was not only the last shelter sought by some cunning criminals, whose hope from any other quarter was desperate, but it bore a mingled burden of dread and ridicule from the public, as likely to be, in many cases, the easy delusion of a morbid philanthropy. Our late honored associate, Chief-Justice Shaw, one of the most critical and competent of the many clear-minded and acute listeners before whom Dr. Bell frequently appeared as an expert, — occasionally before the court, but more freely in private intercourse, — expressed his high appreciation of the dignity, the wisdom, the sagacity, and the professional ability, which Dr. Bell manifested when on the stand under oath. After he had sought the retirement of private life, his services were yet more constantly engaged, alike in civil as in criminal cases, before he courts, where many delicate questions, involving personal liberty or restraint for individuals, as well as large pecuniary interests, were under litigation. His opinion as an expert in the famous "Parish Will Case," before the Surrogate of the city of New York, covering sixty-eight pages in one of the published volumes of that most fertile matter for lawyers and printers, will richly repay the perusal by an unprofessional reader.*

Many of the warmest friends of Dr. Bell regretted that he should have had any other concern with politics than in simply exercising his privileges and doing his duty as a private citizen. Not a few allowed themselves to express this regret very candidly to himself. More than one of those who entertained the loftiest admiration of his professional abilities remonstrated with him against the division of his time and interest, or the diversion of his mind from a work in which he rendered service so highly appreciated, to any share in the political agitations which were peculiarly excited and imbittered when his name was associated with them. Probably he

* In volume iv. Medical Opinions upon the Mental Competency of Mr. Parish.

himself would have acknowledged, that his political episode appeared to him, near the close of his life, as the element in it from which he had derived least satisfaction. The high civic honors and the political distinctions which had been won and maintained by so many members of his family might seem to draw him by traditional and domestic influences to the discharge of his personal obligations in the same direction. He might be impelled by the loftiest motives to stamp the impress of his own convictions and influence upon the party issues of the day, and not feel bound to deny himself a participation in any of the measures, primary or matured, in the results of which he had all a citizen's interests at stake. As a member of the Executive Council of the State in 1850, under the chief-magistracy of Governor Briggs, whom he highly esteemed,* he had an opportunity to perform public service well appreciated by all parties. Especially as a member of the Committee on Pardons, his professional skill, as well as his feelings as a man, and his responsibility as an arbiter in matters of life and death for others, were put to severe and painful tests. Among other cases that engaged his most conscientious and rigid scrutiny was that of Professor Webster. His decision upon it was justified in its developments.

Dr. Bell declined being a candidate for re-election on the Council; finding that the amount and nature of its business made too heavy draughts upon his pre-occupied time. Reference has already been made to his having been a delegate from Middlesex District to the Whig Convention in Baltimore,

* When intelligence of the shocking disaster visited upon Governor Briggs by the accidental discharge of a gun reached Dr. Bell, he referred to it as follows, in a letter to a friend, dated Camp Union, Bladensburg, Md., Sept. 17, 1861: "What a strange, sad death was that of Governor Briggs! The telegraph at first only said, 'Governor Briggs shot!' Of course, imagination could scarce connect the idea of fire-arms or a violent death with him of all men. The speedy explanation demonstrated, that even that manner of death was not inconsistent with his life. I have known my share of the presumptively eminent men of our state of society. My intimate connection with him, officially and socially, in the eventful year 1850, places him the highest on my catalogue of the truly great, — averaging intellect, moral and affective powers."

in the Presidential campaign of 1852. If he had needed initiation into the vexations, antagonisms, and disappointments of party warfare, of factious elements, and of decisions depending upon questions of availability, first and second choices, and the balancings of sectional strength with fixed preferences, and even with righteous principles, he would have received it there. But he was no novice in the arts and passions which have their play in such a scene; still less in a knowledge of those human elements which lie behind them and work through them. We have learned, on no less satisfactory evidence than that of demonstrative experience, to assign a generally corrupting and malignant influence, if not to the essential, certainly then to the incidental, conditions of successful political life; and we are far from admitting, that failure of success in political ambition or office is to be accounted generally to the obstruction interposed by delicacy of sentiment or by severity of principle. Pliny learned and said, in his day, that "the Forum inspires the best men with some degree of malice." But, while we charge upon political life the burden of so demoralizing character, we ought to remember that something depends upon the sort and phase of the politics which from time to time puts its leaders and partisans to trials that may prove too severe for them. The corrupting quality in politics is a varying element in it; and it never can reach such a degree and intensity as necessarily to exclude all honest men from engaging in it, or to inflict the stain of baseness upon all who entered into it with right hearts. If we repeat, as verified, the cynical saying, that "every man has his price," we must be careful to guard ourselves against sharing in an original human plagiarism in the use of the maxim, by remembering that the first known authority for it was Satan, in the Book of Job: "Doth Job serve God for nought?" Let us quote our author, and perhaps that will dissuade us from repeating the maxim.

It happened that our politics, at the time when Dr. Bell

was for a brief season a participant in its strifes, was of a particularly poor character. He doubtless found in his own experience, that the existence of two, and even of three, parties, did not afford a good man an opportunity of choice, by however strong a preference, of identifying himself with the whole of the truth or the right in the espousal of either of them. Still less would he have acknowledged full sympathy with all the details of measures, and all the acts and opinions of men, of his own party. He was a strong and earnest Whig. He wrote in the newspapers, he attended and addressed meetings, in the interests of that party. But it was at a time when that party had lost power, and was rapidly disintegrating; when its life, many of its best ornaments and champions, and, as the event proved, its former dominancy, were passing into a new organization on different issues, which steadily strengthened from a so-called faction into a dispenser of state and national offices. Dr. Bell served the Whig party at a time when its honors were those of defeat, tradition, and the surviving esteem and allegiance of many excellent men, who were again enjoying private life. *O fortunati si nôrint!* &c. He was the candidate of the Whig party of the Seventh Congressional District of Massachusetts in 1852, unanimously so designated by a convention at the first balloting. At the first trial for an election, he received a plurality of fifteen hundred ballots; so that, by the provisions of some of our States then, and of our own now, he would have acceded to the office: but, as a majority of the ballots was then required here, he failed of it. On the second trial, by a coalition of the two opposing parties, he was defeated by some three hundred ballots. He was a working member of the State Convention in 1853 for revising the Constitution. His name was used against his will as the Whig candidate for Governor in 1856.

Dr. Bell experienced many severe domestic bereavements, during his superintendency of the Asylum, in the loss of chil-

dren; and, finally, in the decease of his wife. He was a most affectionate and faithful husband and father. His own delicate health, and that of every member of his immediate family, made him thoughtful and watchful of all the risks and all the conditions of security attendant upon human life. He enjoyed very many of the attractions of a private home in the centre of such a circle of patients and professional assistants. The sumptuous and spacious mansion, erected on a commanding site by the late Joseph Barrell, Esq., with its extensive gardens and fields, had been the original edifice, and continued to be the centre of the many solid structures built in connection with it for the uses of the institution. Architectural arrangements, greatly improved under Dr. Bell's supervision, gave easy access to all the parts of the establishment. The site was unsurpassed for convenience and healthfulness; and there was no drawback upon its local advantages or surroundings, till the numerous railroad crossings in the neighborhood seemed for a time to threaten the necessity or expediency of a removal. The almost constant shriek of the steam-whistle was a sound certainly not favorable to jarred nerves and morbid sensibilities. Dr. Bell was for a time exceedingly disturbed by this increasing annoyance. Having given such zeal and fertile ingenuity of invention to the perfection of every external and internal arrangement of the institution, it was not strange that he should have feared great mischief from this evil, and have remonstrated with some warmth against the sacrifice of so much benevolent and scientific outlay to the conveniences of engineering. He thought that the lines of radiation from the city might have laid the road-beds a little farther off from the grounds of the institution; or, at least, that some provision might have been made for abating the nuisance of that shrieking discord from the engines, which sounded far more dismally to his sympathetic ears than any of those human outcries supposed by popular fancy to be the chief horror of an asylum for the mentally diseased. This

passing reference to a subject of very natural apprehension to all who were interested in the institution has been made here, because Dr. Bell was personally at the time visited with some sharp censure from those who were prominently concerned in the arrangements against which he remonstrated.

In the centre of such surroundings, Dr. Bell found his home for a score of years. All that his warm domestic attachments could do towards making it a happy place, and relieving any sombre associations with it for those whom he loved most tenderly, was done. But many clouds came over that home, and broke in great sorrow upon the father and husband. Three of his seven children died there: viz., Mary, Aug. 22, 1847; Henry James, Oct. 3 of the same year; and then his eldest son, Samuel John, a member of Harvard College, and a youth of great promise, Nov. 9, 1853. She who had shared these afflictions with him, his excellent and much-endeared wife, died in her confinement, March 1, 1855, aged forty-two years.

Probably the severe trial of these afflictions, the exhaustive effects upon mind and body of so many years of the most exacting professional service, and the desire "to husband out life's taper" for some ends yet attractive and possible to him, were the occasions, as they certainly were satisfactory reasons, for his resignation of office, contemplated some time before it took effect. There were intimations in some quarters that his interest in his work had declined, or yielded to the attractions of political life. These intimations, so far as they touched his fidelity or implied ambitious aims, were simply idle. He had frequently intimated his wishes for relief; but the trustees felt the difficulty of finding a fit successor. At length, in his Report, presented Jan. 23, 1856, he avows his decision. We will now allow him to speak for himself: —

"I communicated to your Board, several months since, my intention not to be a candidate for re-election to the office which I have

held by your appointment for so many years. Having made my arrangements to retire to a spot not far distant, where I shall have the happiness of opening my eyes each morning on this blessed institution, and feeling that my own happiness will be intimately connected with witnessing its continued prosperity, I hope hereafter to be no stranger within its walls. Hence I feel that no melancholy valedictory is required, or would be in keeping with the occasion of my handing over this charge to another. I will only say, that, as far as I know, I leave this Asylum prosperous in its own affairs, and amply possessed of the confidence of the community. I leave it with a heart grateful to that superintending Providence which shielded me for so many years from those bereavements and that ill health which have of late overwhelmed me, so that I have been enabled to do something for those placed under my care, as well as for the general cause of the insane over our country, — grateful for the uniform support, the indulgent forbearance, the kind sympathy in my many trials, of the members of your Board, present and past; grateful to the medical profession, whose cheerful and ready confidence and uniform courtesy are, and ever will be, very dear to my memory; grateful to a community which has, in the various attacks to which this and all such institutions are ever liable, from the mistaken, the ungratified, and the malignant, sprung promptly to our relief, rendering explanations and defences superfluous; grateful to a long line of recovered patients of both sexes, whose kindly recognition of our efforts has inspired new activity, and made labors pleasant, however in themselves anxious and exhausting; and, lastly, grateful to those associated with me in various capacities, — most of them for many years, and some during my entire service, — in the discharge of our holy functions. I can mark the day of my leaving these walls, with a 'white stone;' and enter again the world, without one feeling other than that of kindness and good-will to all mankind.

"The experience of the nineteen years since I was called unexpectedly to the superintendence of the M'Lean Asylum, without application on my own part, or knowledge that I was thought of for the office, an entire stranger to every member of the Board, and almost equally a stranger in the Commonwealth, has not passed, I trust, without adding something to the common stock of knowledge of the treatment, moral and medical, of insanity. The experience of this institution — almost the earliest of the curative hospitals of the land — has been most freely shared with those which have been added suc-

cessively to the long roll now extending from Maine to California. Christianity can hardly show a mightier triumph than the fact, that, since the brief date just named, the number of hospitals for the insane, in the United States, has increased from half a dozen to between forty and fifty; and the accommodations for patients have risen from about five hundred to between ten and eleven thousand. Even the four larger British Provinces adjoining us have caught the influence of our zeal; and each of them has, during that period, provided itself with a large and well-furnished institution essentially upon our models.

"While the moral treatment of the insane, in its great principles, was as well established half a century since as at this hour, the means of carrying out the highest forms of such treatment have been constantly augmenting, because their necessity has been more and more recognized by those on whom hospitals depend for support. The only limit now seems to be in the ingenuity and industry of those who have the charge of applying those means. While many things, which promised well in words and in theory, have been tried, some of the most lauded have so far failed as to be abandoned by the wise and judicious. The character of the patients at different institutions obviously requires differences of moral treatment; and this may change in the same institution. For example: mechanical and agricultural labor, which was foremost in the moral appliances of this Asylum, has long since been abandoned, because the class of sufferers has entirely changed since the establishment of so many hospitals around us.

"The trial was made here, for several years, of the entire disuse of all forms of muscular restraint. Much was said and vaunted of this experiment elsewhere, and it was thought well to give it a full trial. The result was the conviction, that no such exclusive system was, here at least, compatible with the true interests of all patients.

"The experiment was also made here, of allowing certain patients, in pretty large numbers, to go abroad on their parole. No accident occurred in consequence, and very rarely was the pledge broken. But instead of making the patient more contented, and adding to his happiness, the reverse was eminently the case; and the conclusion was forced upon us, that almost every patient, who was so far disordered in mind as to justify detention at all, was too much disordered for even a qualified liberty.

"The intermingling of patients of both sexes, under the eye and

supervision of officers and attendants, both in daily religious exercises and in occasions of festivity, was very thoroughly tested in several years' experience. Its inconveniences led, long ago, to its abandonment. Whatever may be the case in other institutions, here such interminglings proved unprofitable and unwise.

"Other elements of moral treatment have been verified in our experience, as in all the preceding history of the insane and the institutions for their relief. The interdiction of the visits and correspondence of friends is ever one of the severest trials of those in charge of hospitals. As the indispensable necessity of such separation was one of the earliest of the recorded facts of medical observation, so it remains true and prominent in every day's experience of every asylum. If the head of an institution can be tempted in any point to yield or evade his convictions of duty, it will be here; for such convictions he must have with his first practical lessons, and they will keep strengthening with each year of experience. He will be pressed to abandon his duty by those who must be assumed to have a far nearer interest in the sufferer than he can have. After earnest and prolonged expositions of his grounds of action and the results of his often-repeated experimentings, and after the most earnest appeals that the welfare, and perhaps recovery, of his patient shall not be put in jeopardy by any feelings or false reasonings or capricious suspicions of friends, he will find fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, whose whole knowledge of the subject is bounded by the case in hand, willing and anxious to assume all responsibilities, and take all risks, for obtaining this strange gratification. The hospital superintendent who will the most readily yield to such importunities, backed by perhaps the most degrading intimations as to the grounds of refusal, will be the most popular. Like the medical practitioner who allows his patient to have his own way as to diet and regimen, he will be deemed and loved as a very indulgent physician. The temptation of the selfish heart to yield after half a dozen or more pressing solicitations, connected with insinuations which the superintendent is naturally desirous to meet by the easy demonstration of their falsity, is very strong. This fact ought to be recognized by the friends of the patients; and they should respect his judgment when he opposes their wishes at the cost of pain to himself. Yet probably not one person in fifty would ever have a pang at the reflection, that his pertinacity had destroyed or materially lessened the chances of restoration to a loved relative.

"After a life devoted thus far almost exclusively to this specialty, were there any one counsel which I would impress on any one who may be called to this trust, it would be to stand firm to his convictions on this greatest item of moral treatment. Receive no patient where only a half confidence in your character as an honest and competent man is extended. Receive no patient whose friends are not fully cognizant of what duty demands of them in the way of co-operation. Thus assuming a sacred trust, discharge it fully by resisting unreasonable demands, or return it to the responsible friends by a dismissal of the patient. And should you live long enough, as I have done, to look over a catalogue of two or three thousand patients who have been under your care, you will be surprised to see how close a relation has obtained between recovery, and a full, cheerful, patient co-operation on the part of friends. Such co-operation extends throughout every ward of an asylum. Each attendant, fit by intelligence and zeal for such duties, does not fail to perceive the waste of bestowing labor where the superstructure is at intervals to be dashed to the ground; and it is not in human nature to re-engage with earnestness and spirit in a task sure to prove abortive.

"An erroneous impression prevails as to this system of separation from old associations calculated to keep fresh the disease. That is spoken of, as a general rule, which, in fact, is only applicable and applied to the probably recoverable classes of patients. Where a case is deemed beyond cure, or is here merely for custody and as much comfort as possible, no objection is made to the correspondence or visits of proper friends. If such visits obviously kindle up the fires of disease, and subject an institution to great disturbance and expense, or, as is often the case, re-awaken a suicidal propensity, and thus involve the necessity of watching night after night, for weeks or months, it is but just that a proper understanding with friends should be had, or further care declined.

"About closing my duties in this field, I shall be glad, by leaving a record of these solemn convictions of my best judgment and experience, to strengthen the hands of those who may come after me, in this most perplexing, as it is one of the most momentous, of the incidents of the moral treatment of the insane."

These paragraphs, crowded with the results of Dr. Bell's experience, may serve as the summary of his labors for the best years of his life. Any one, who would appreciatingly esti-

mate their character and value, must aid whatever knowledge he may have upon their subject by large draughts on his imagination for following into details nearly three thousand cases, each of which made some special demand upon the skill and resources of the physician. Yet, probably, Dr. Bell would have said, if closely catechized upon the point, that what he did for his patients directly was but a moiety of the occupation which engaged him from day to day. Intercourse and correspondence with their friends outside the walls was labor enough of itself to engross a single mind; and often the vexations connected with it were of a sort from which he might without impatience, and not unreasonably, have expected that he might have been spared. Taken in the sum of all its requisitions and responsibilities, his task was one than which all the manifold demands made by men and women upon a man exact none requiring a finer combination of talents, acquisitions, and virtues. To resign such an office with dignity, after discharging it with all fidelity and with eminent success, would have been the crowning honor of Dr. Bell's life, had he not yet a sacrifice reserved for him by Providence to be rendered to his country. The trustees, in their Report for the same year, make the following acknowledgment: —

"It will be seen by Dr. Bell's Report, that he has resigned the superintendence of the M'Lean Asylum, which he has conducted with signal ability and success since his election in December, 1836. The number of patients has nearly trebled under his administration, and the institution has gained a high and wide-spread reputation. It is unnecessary for us to say how much the trustees regret to lose his services. His skill and kindness and care, his activity, decision, and fertility of resources, have been conspicuous in his management of the patients; his quick perception and uniform courtesy have given him that influence over their friends which is one of the first requisites for the successful treatment of the insane; while his weight of character has won the confidence of the community, and preserved the Asylum in a great measure from that suspicion and obloquy to

which such institutions are peculiarly exposed. In retiring from his arduous and responsible post, we trust that he will find an opportunity to recruit his strength for new services to his fellow-men."

Dr. Bell had provided for himself, in the proximity of his new place of residence, the privilege of frequent and ever-welcome visits to the Asylum, as one who, having discharged himself from the severity of such a service, takes pleasure in friendly overseership and sympathy with his successor. That successor, as already named, was Dr. Booth, who had been for so many years the assistant and hourly friend of Dr. Bell. "His devoted and useful labors," as the trustees characterized them, when "recognizing his merits as an officer, and deploring the loss which the institution has sustained in his early and lamented decease," were closed in less than two years. While he was wasting within the walls by pulmonary disease, the trustees called upon Dr. Bell, near the close of the year 1857, to assume temporarily the superintendency; and he acceded to the request, preparing also the Report for that year.

His own plans were carried out in the erection of a commodious dwelling-house on the north side of Monument Square, in Charlestown. He supervised its construction, and seemed to take great pleasure in the work; having an opportunity to carry out his own theories of ventilating and warming, — more successfully, however, as some of his neighbor visitors in the winter thought, in the former than in the latter condition. Surrounded by his books, he knew how to read them, how to value them, and how to add to them. He had with him his four surviving children, — Clara, Frances Pinkerton, William Appleton, and Charles John, — between the ages of one and nine. His own tender care of them was shared by near female relatives residing with him. As a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he highly enjoyed the occasions of their respective meetings. He had, in 1847,

received the degree of D.C.L. from King's College, Nova Scotia; and, in 1855, that of LL.D. from Amherst College. His inquisitive cast of mind would have made him eminent in any walk of science, as it did interest him in experimental research in very many branches of it. Mr. Columbus Tyler, his daily intimate at the Asylum for twenty years, communicates so much about him in a few words, that I will quote it from a note written to me by him two days after Dr. Bell's obsequies: —

"His character was pure and sincere, without selfishness or pride. Liberal in his religious views, he saw some good in every Christian sect: the good he adopted and secured; the dogmas fell harmless at his feet. A just man, he utterly loathed any thing like cant or hypocrisy. He was fond of architecture and the mechanic arts. With an eye quick to perceive, he had a wonderful power in the adaptation of means to ends. He had great skill in the rough drawing of beasts, birds, and men; and, to please the children, by a few strokes of the pen would make otherwise natural figures most grotesquely ridiculous. He was always candid and merciful in his judgments of others; and believed every man had an *average*, which should be estimated before an opinion was formed of him. I have no doubt that he was the first person who passed communications over the electric telegraph. He declared such to be the fact. The communications were fully and accurately established; but owing to some difficulty in the machinery for expressing the thoughts conveyed, and funds failing, the labor was for the time suspended; and, in the interim, his friend and associate died. He petitioned Congress for remuneration, and claimed himself to be the inventor. At the same time, he was interested in a loom, or gin, for the manufacture of flax; which, I understood from him, was perfected, and is now in successful operation abroad. I was quite interested in a bed he made with his own hands to keep himself dry while in or out of camp. Taking two India-rubber sheets, he sewed them together on the sides and at one end, with blankets intervening, — leaving one end open like a great bag, into which he slipped; reposing dry and warm, however damp the ground or atmosphere might be."

Dr. Bell's occupancy of his new dwelling in Charlestown was attended at first by tokens of failing health, which, as in-

terpreted by the experiences he had witnessed in members of his family, might well excite his intense anxiety, not for himself, but for those over whom he exercised the fondest earthly guardianship. Some private papers have been intrusted to my perusal, which I have read with an interest and a sensibility that may not be transferred by any attempted rehearsal of them to these pages. They are of so sacredly confidential a character, that I have hesitated whether even the existence of them, and still more any reference to their contents, might with propriety be introduced here. But I am writing a Memoir of Dr. Bell. Besides contributing to it the facts and dates of his life, to be set forth with the narrative and comments which they suggest, he is entitled to contribute something of himself, — something that indicates the tone of his inner being, the outlook of his heart, and the bearing of his spirit, as he contemplated the loftiest responsibilities of existence, and faced the grim realities drawn on this side of the veil that hides its mysteries. The image in which he is most likely to rise before the minds of his fellow-citizens, during the last five years of his life in Charlestown, is as a pensive, serious, and dignified man, leading two or three little children through the streets, or stopping with them to gaze at any thing that attracted them in the shop-windows or the highways. His tall form did not prevent his coming down to their familiarity in all things. At congenial seasons, he was seen with them, or alone, training or weeding the flowers in the garden-patch adjoining his house. Appointed a commissioner to superintend the erection of the State Insane Asylum at Northampton, and often summoned to a distance to attend courts as an expert, he was frequently absent at short intervals, when his health permitted. His skill was constantly enlisted for advice and prescriptions for patients, or the friends of patients calling at his dwelling. But his home — in one sense, a new experience; and, in a very serious sense, a place of profoundly realized responsibility to him —

was the centre of his life. He had really never been a housekeeper, in the fullest sense of the term, until then. In connection with his first complete experience as such, under the burden of a doubled parental trust, he was called to contemplate the reasonable probability that he was very soon to follow his deceased partner, and leave his children wholly orphaned. It was under such forebodings that he prepared some papers just referred to, a reserved notice of which may not only be allowable, but most appropriate, as revealing to us alike the tender and the solid qualities which entered into the composition and substance of the man. I must consider his cautioning presence near me as seeking to seal up again what he left to be read for only one eye, though not forbidding those who esteemed him to catch here and there a sentence of his secrets. In a closed package, addressed to his brother-in-law and executor, and most confidential friend, "John M. Pinkerton, — not to be opened until after I shall have ceased to live," — was found a document of five well-covered sheets, written in Dr. Bell's firm and legible style, not showing any tremulousness from disease, or from the contemplation of the themes with which it deals in a manly and Christian-hearted simplicity. It is dated "Charlestown, Sunday evening, April 11, 1858." Such extracts as we venture to copy may be taken chiefly from the beginning of it:—

"Your dear sister left us on the 1st of March, 1855. Three years ago, perhaps to a day, on one of the early April days, a month after her departure, I came down to the house in which I am now writing this, with two of our children. I suppose we looked over its unfinished rooms, which, just in the same state, she and I had visited a few months before. By the wish of the children, we went out upon Monument Square, with one of them (Clara) in my hand, and Fannie in my arms. We walked around the Monument. As I was wearily and heavily turning across the path parallel to High Street, and facing my house, I felt an irritation and tickling about my throat, which resulted in the ejection of a small quantity of bloody expecto-

ration. Having had no previous symptoms of pulmonary trouble, I tried to make myself believe that it was consequent upon some small exudition of blood in the nasal or pharyngeal passages. Yet, in the recollection of my brother John's first symptoms and my general acquaintance with the subject, I could not shut my eyes to the probability of its having come from the lungs, and of its being the indication of tubercular disease awakened into action. I think I can say, without affectation (for of that you would not suspect me in a communication like this), that, in itself, this sudden and unexpected warning gave me no pain. It was only on the second instantly recurring idea of my four little children that I recoiled at this mission of the grim messenger. I returned home [to the Asylum]; went about my duties; and no human being ever heard of this first symptom of my illness until your eye now rests upon it in this record."

He then describes, with particulars, a second attack, which, after riding from the Asylum to Boston and doing some errands, he experienced in the city on June 29:—

"As I drove up through Court Square to Bowdoin Square, I found myself raising pure blood; evidently from my lungs, as it came with a light and easy cough, unlike nasal hemorrhage. After a few minutes, it abated and ceased. On my arriving at home, I was internally agitated, externally calm. My brother's case, who died in some few weeks of an unchecked pulmonary hemorrhage, was before me. I sat myself at a drawer of private papers, and assorted and destroyed such as I thought best. About dinner-time, I felt another oppression and bleeding to be impending. I retired to my chamber; sent for Dr. Booth and Mr. Tyler; and, as the bleeding had commenced, Dr. Wyman was called in at their suggestion. You know the subsequent history of my life. On my journey to the British Provinces the next July and August, I had no subsequent attack; nor have I had any, up to this day, of hemorrhage, with an exception scarcely worth mentioning. On my way to Halifax, N.S., I had a sleepless night on board the miserable steamer 'Creole' (recently the property of Lopez and his wretched adventurers to Cuba) up the bay. Leaving my cold and offensive berth at early dawn, I sat myself in a chair, took up a Bible which was at hand, and read some of the Psalms. A slight irritation occurred, and an ejection of blood upon its page! This was some three weeks after the turn of illness in which you will recall me as lying in Mr. Tyler's chamber, surrounded

with ice, and in great distress. From the earliest of my expectorations of blood, I have felt that the question of my continuance in life was simply one of time. I had a perfect consciousness that pulmonary disease was present. I knew, that, at the age of nearly fifty, its progress might be more protracted; but I think I can say, that, from that moment to this hour, the idea of a full recovery of health has never been before me. My highest hope has been, that the fatal event might be procrastinated as long as possible. I have already been blessed with the fruition of a portion of my hopes. The three years which have passed away have carried my dear children along through so much — so large a proportion, I may say — of the most anxious and difficult part of their career. . . . When I contemplate all that has been saved and secured us between the close of my life three years ago and the present time, I know not what terms of gratitude will express my obligations to the great Disposer of events.

"In casting your eyes back over the events of the three past years, you may be ready to express your astonishment at my avowal, — sincere as you may be ready to receive it, — that I have never indulged the expectation of recovery. 'What!' you will exclaim: 'has he not been a candidate for office, made public speeches, been honored with promotions in the Medical Society, &c.; been engaged in building a hospital, in buying and selling?' All admitted. The uncertainty of the event, whether this year, or the next, or the next after, will account for much, if any, inconsistency. Anxiety to have things, both as to character and property, in a way to make my name and my memory dear to my children, may explain any indifference in my daily life to that impending event. Even habit does not fail of rendering the most solemn of human events familiar to the mind.

"Still, I may say, in all candor and truth, that, while giving such attention as I have to the affairs of the world, I never have failed to realize the insignificance of the present. In the silence and quiet of the night, — such as this in which I am now writing, — I have pondered on the great questions, — 'If a man die, shall he live again?' and, 'How shall a man be just with God?' I have studied and thought, as a man may be presumed to study and think who has no motive to bias him beyond the hope of arriving at the great truth.

"Few men have been more torn and distressed than I have been in this research. The truths of the Bible have, for many years, been

fully accepted by me. The internal evidences of Christianity have been overpowering to my mind. A system, as compared with all that the world had dreamed of up to that day of the Saviour's appearance, so infinitely exalted, — a system so infinitely exalted above all that men have reached since, or which they ever can reach, could leave no room for doubt of its celestial origin on the part of any reasonably enlightened mind."

What follows in this connection I refrain from transcribing. In summary, I may report, that in the same earnest and heart-revealing sincerity, characteristic of a profound piety and a manly independence of spirit, Dr. Bell attempts to define, not even to all his nearest friends, but to the most confidential of them, who knew his inner being through other sympathies, his religious position and experience. It is substantially the same as has been revealed to us by many devout yet thoroughly free-minded and deep-thinking men, whose reverent faith and allegiance were won to the essentials of Christian piety, but who were confounded by, and were conscious of dissenting from, the doctrinal standards and the recognized tests of sectarianism. The honored memories of the departed of his own lineage, especially of him whom he calls his "noble grandfather," of his "sainted wife," and the affectionate influence of his nearest friends, would have availed much to set for his personal aim — as his "yearnings" were for — their own standard of belief and experience. He says, —

"For myself, I can only say, in my inability to reach, after many and prayerful hours, days, months, and years, any full, clear, satisfactory views as to what manner of Christian I am, — if worthy of that sacred name, in the language of my friend Dr. Brigham, cut off in sudden disease, instead of having the long opportunity indulged to me, — 'Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief.' I hope my friends will think of me with all charity as to my religious opinions. If it has not been in my power to accord my assent to any form of creed, I know nothing of pride, of conceit, of desire for eccentricity, to prevent my having done so."

These heart-revelations are the introductory matter of a document whose further contents have no place here. They are laden with the affectionate thoughtfulness and the wise planning and provision for an endeared little flock, which any rising or setting sun might find wholly orphaned. Prudent plans, which provide for their needful modification, are laid down; and the gradations of family affection are recognized as defining such requisitions as are to be made upon it. The father reads the character and traces the development of each of his children as the art of the phrenologist — making all account of brain, and none of heart — never can do. The Scotch-Irish and New-England factors, in the resultant estimate of the greater needs of humanity, are tersely embodied in a sentence, in which that father requires that the purchased or rented home for his children and their guardians should be "near to schools, churches, and good society." He left them means sufficient to meet their needs.

Leaving the envelope to which he had committed this document unopened, on two occasions, at subsequent dates, this ever-thoughtful parent signified, in a similar way, his posthumous wishes. The first of these, dated "Evening of Dec. 12, 1859," after gratefully expressing the thanks of the writer for his continuance in life, is, in the main, occupied with a reiteration of his desires, under some slight modifications, and with tender utterances of affection and confidence. The other paper, bearing date Jan. 22, 1861, is introduced as follows: —

"A day of unusually poor health has naturally again turned my thoughts upon that event, which, now for nearly six years, has never been absent from me. Not that I would allow you to think that I have looked the wrongfully termed 'grim messenger' in the face with dread or trembling, but only as connecting my removal hence with the welfare of my dear children. . . . I have not been unwilling to manifest to you the processes of my mind and sensibilities during the past years, wherein I have walked cheerful and composed,

I think you will bear me witness, 'through the shadow of the valley of death.' With what mercy have I been spared since that hour, — six years ago next April, — when, while walking on the square opposite my house, with a too-heavy child in my arms, I discovered that my constitution, gradually failing since the death of my dear wife, gave me notice, in a moderate turn of hæmoptysis, of that which my professional experience compelled me to accept was my inevitable fate! I would have put the cup away from me, not, as far as I believe, on my own account, for my own life was then 'played out;' but," &c. . . . "My prayers have been answered more fully than I dared ask or think," &c.

The writer then indicates it as his testamentary wish, that his library and philosophical instruments should be given to the college at Amherst, Mass., which "had conferred on him its highest literary honor, without his knowledge or any outside solicitation."

On the anniversary of the fifth birthday of his youngest boy, and, soon after, for each of his other children, he who could recall "the feelings of a motherless boy," wrote, for the same posthumous uses, words of affectionate and wise counsel. Each of these autographs of him who would have fallen on his last sleep before they would be unsealed, was accompanied by a bound collection of most of the pieces which had been published from his pen. In all the private papers which have thus been partially communicated to eyes for which they never were designed, are found the most engaging evidences of a wealth of fine sentiment and lofty principle, veiled under the modest, and, as some thought, the too-reserved, or even moody, exterior of our subject. It is impossible but that the occupation in which an earnest and able man has been engaged for a score of years, should convey to his features and demeanor some characteristic symbol of its nature and effect on himself. As his features settle into the mould which mature and repeated and continuous thought and occupation have applied to them, they become an index of his calling, and, to some extent, of the character which that calling has helped

to develop. One can hardly conceive, that a man, who had been engaged in such labors and ministrations as had so thoroughly tasked the qualities so congenial to them in Dr. Bell, should be a man of a light or gay aspect. The marvel, to be explained only by the wondrous resources of human nature, is, that such labors as his had been, leave the capacity of cheerfulness, or the ability of intercourse with the ordinary world of men and things, unimpaired. Not unfrequently, the question would be asked by those, who, having no personal acquaintance with Dr. Bell, drew an inference from his aspect, whether he was not a sad or melancholy man. He certainly was not a jovial or hilarious man. It would not have added to, it would rather have abated from, the esteem of his friends to have found him so. But he was far from being a man of a melancholy spirit. His brooding and introspective look indicated the cast and tone of thought and sympathy which he had so long engaged upon the graver elements of human life. But there was in him a capacity as well as an appreciation of humor. He was a very delightful, as well as most instructive, companion for a quiet country drive or an evening conference. He was a ready listener, and a very communicative, though a quiet and moderate, talker. His knowledge was various, and his resources extensive. His library, moderate in size, is curiously catholic and comprehensive in its contents; the especial paucity of medical books being significant of his marked professional characteristic, of preferring observation to authority. His philosophical instruments show that he had used them. Every thing of his own that he left behind him — his tools of trade, correspondence, and unfinished work — indicates a mind, which, while its chief devotion had been given to a specialty, had reserved capacity and interest for a variety both of profound and of practical pursuits. The last theme of speculative study in which he was engaged, before the alarming state of national affairs wholly engrossed him, was that of the "Demoniacs of the New Testament." The noble collection

of "Heath Papers," then recently presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society by Mr. Amos A. Lawrence, drew him often to the Library Rooms to spend some pleasant hours in their examination. He had a sense of obligation moving in him — accepting the hint given to the members of this Society by the bee-hive so prominent in its seal — to prove his right in its fellowship by some contribution in its service. Had his life been spared for peaceful labors, he would certainly have left some other evidence of his membership than now appears in tributary honors in the publications of the Society.

The posthumous disclosures made by the private papers that have been referred to show to us that Dr. Bell's continuance in life, and especially with such a measure of bodily vigor as to qualify him for any active duties, was unexpected to himself. Of course, the longer the reprieve granted to him, the more hopeful would he be, — so human nature works in us, — that a disease which did not fulfil its first threats might indefinitely lengthen its truce, if not wholly yield the ground which it had gained in his constitution. His friends recognized his condition to be that of permanent invalidism. His intense sense of parental responsibility, and the conviction that nothing could supply, by substitution, his own personal oversight of his children, made him cling strongly to life, even if under limitations of its common enjoyments. He acquiesced in the necessary restraints which his invalidism imposed. He seems to have been one of the few persons, under medical supervision, who can with safety allow themselves to feel their own pulse, and study the symptoms of their own maladies. Most of his chance acquaintance were surprised, when, at his decease, they came to learn that he was no older in years; for though the honors of his head, unthinned and unbleached, left him one token of youth, his stooping gait, and the thoughtfulness stamped on his unfurrowed features, gave him the aspect of more advanced age.

It is possible that kindly home-nursing, easy circumstances, and the gentle bodily exercise on which Dr. Bell relied, might have given him a few more years, not so much for lengthening his own life, as for leading his children, still under his eye, out of childhood to an appreciation of his wishes for them. But a service was in preparation for him, which, whether or not shortening his life, gave him an opportunity to discharge, in a conspicuous field, some of the noblest duties of a patriot and a Christian. The political party with which Dr. Bell was in full sympathy foreboded civil war, as the inevitable result of the agitations and measures in attempting to resist which it lost its own dominancy. This Memoir is no proper medium for the discussion of such themes, however the writer might be tempted to pause upon them in order to plead indirectly for his own convictions as in harmony or in opposition with those of Dr. Bell. Whatever judgment one may form of his party affinities, principles, or purposes, he belongs, by a noble self-consecration, to a better than any partisan fellowship. When the fearful strife which he had foreboded actually opened, he sought no immunity from self-sacrifice in falling back upon his despised prophecies, but owned the stern presence of an occasion which spoke no longer to party, but to patriotism. Before the first flash of rebellion lit the Southern sky, he watched the omens of each passing hour with dismay. He read the papers, the speeches, the bulletins, with an intense avidity; and with slender hope, because of overwhelming apprehension, waited for the catastrophe. He knew that what was left in him from the training of his life was a gift of merciful ministration for such scenes as battle-fields would crowd before him. It was reason enough for him to become a soldier, that he was skilled in all the direful tasks of high professional care. To the amazement of all who knew him, he became a soldier.

We follow Dr. Bell into his new field of service, — the doubtful convalescent or valetudinarian, the man of peace,

habituated to all the comforts and refinements of a sheltered life, the father of four motherless children, the patriot soldier. He knew well what was before him. He probably fixed his eyes, with a gaze such as draws the heart out with it, upon the furnishings of his library, upon the children whom he was to leave to such faithful care as he had provided for them, and upon the rugged monumental shaft rising before his windows in the light of early spring-time, when he wrote the letter we are now to read. His correspondence with the department, official, indeed, but essentially private, — on file in the State House, — has been kindly submitted to me; and I am allowed to make a discreet use of it. It may well be introduced by the following letter, the date of which was already historic when it was written; and, unknown to the writer of it, was perhaps, while his pen was upon the paper, receiving a new consecration, at least for Massachusetts, by the tragedy transpiring in the streets of Baltimore, in the wild rage of a mob upon our soldiers marching to the defence of the nation's capital. "The nineteenth of April" was the right day for a citizen of Middlesex County, living under the shadow of Bunker-hill Monument, to select for the date of this manly offer.

MONUMENT SQUARE, CHARLESTOWN, April 19, 1861.

To Adjutant-General SCHOULER.

DEAR SIR, — We are at that point where every man who can devote himself to his country's service should come forward.

I beg that you would put on file this my application for any position in the medical service of the Commonwealth in which I could be useful.

I am aware of the law under which surgeons are appointed, and of course understand that you have no direct control of this matter. But there may be exigencies, from deaths, resignations, unusual demands, or unforeseen circumstances, when you may be called upon to advise or suggest. If such a call is made, be pleased to remember this application of your old personal and political friend.

I may be allowed to say, should this communication ever be brought up for consideration, that, while I am known mainly in another specialty, I was educated in the New-York hospitals for a surgeon; and for some years, in a wide field, I was much engaged in that capacity. Inquiry in New Hampshire would show that there are few of the greater operations of surgery which I have not performed.

I am a little above fifty; in health so good as not to have been confined to my house a day in the past three years, and entirely removed from all cares by easy personal circumstances. Of course, am ready, at the shortest notice, for any duty.

As this application is for *use*, not *show*, may I beg of you that it may not reach the press, which, in its avidity for paragraphs, might be ready to put me unnecessarily before the public?

With sincere regards, I am very truly yours,

LUTHER V BELL.

As the staff of the militia was full, immediately on the issuing of the President's proclamation, calling "for a volunteer force to aid in the enforcement of the laws, and the suppression of the insurrection," Dr. Bell went to the Surgeon-General, Dr. William J. Dale, at the State House, and renewed his offer of service. Dr. Dale mounted to the Governor's room, and stated the wishes of the applicant. The Governor at once replied, "Tell Dr. Bell, I consider the State would be honored by a commission conferred upon him. Ask him to step up here." After a few words of conversation, the Governor, expressing to Dr. Bell his high appreciation of his patriotism, directed that a commission should be made out for him as surgeon of the Eleventh Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers, dated June 10, 1861.

On the 1st of May following, Dr. Bell makes an official return of his examination of seventy-three recruits, of which he rejects four. On June 25, he makes a communication from Camp Cameron, North Cambridge, on hospital-stores. Every moment of his time was engrossed by anxious cares and wise provisions for his men, and by a general supervision

reaching beyond his immediate province, to prepare for a hurried departure for the scene of war. A letter dated from New York, June 30, 1861, describes the transit of his regiment, and its arrival in that city. He refers cheerily to his extemporaneous discharge of the duty, shaken off on to him by his colonel, of responding, in front of the City Hall, to a welcome given to the regiment by the sons of Massachusetts, through their president, Richard Warren, Esq. After a few words of thoughtful professional and official wisdom, showing how faithfully his work would be done, he adds, "It is said by some, that Baltimore will begin with us in opposing General Banks's recent sternly proper measure. Well, *n'importe.* I had as lief begin service at that city as any other place." His regiment was stationed for a while at "Camp Sanford," Washington; whence he writes frequently in reference to what he finds necessary, as ambulances, stretchers, &c., giving the results of some already dear-bought experience, and drawing ingenious ink-sketches of proper beds and cots for the camp. It is evident, even from his briefest communications, that Dr. Bell apprehended the nearness and the possibly disastrous results of a decisive engagement with the enemy. The records and descriptions of the awful scenes which followed are fearfully voluminous; but we cannot refrain from putting into print yet one more, in an intensely interesting letter from his pen. It is addressed to his friend Dr. Dale, and is dated,—

AT OUR FORMER CAMP, NEAR ALEXANDRIA,
Wednesday, July 24, 1861.

MY DEAR DOCTOR, — Knowing that you would feel an interest in my movements and fate during the past eventful week, I seize the earliest moment, after our regaining this place of safety, after the most terrible defeat of modern times, to give you a brief and crude narration of what concerns me personally; aware that you must already know vastly more of the general events than I have the means of doing. I will begin with last Tuesday week. After

resting a day or two at this beautiful spot, whence I wrote you at a late hour before we left, the order came for us to march at two o'clock, P.M.

With four or five regiments more, we set out in fine spirits for unknown regions, as not a whisper ever passes from those at the head as to the route or destination. Soon the column began to move at a snail's pace; and, after many hours, in this way we reached Aquatink Creek, where the bridges were burned, and the whole division had to pass over a single plank, which explained the strange delay. The creek was at the bottom of the deepest ravine, and then the hill on the other side was to be surmounted over the most horrible obstructions. At half-past three, A.M., we lay on the ground for an hour. Recommencing, we dragged along all day, under a burning sun, and through paths cut in the forest, so as to avoid the trees cut down and masked batteries. At night, we bivouacked near what is called Sangster's Station. That afternoon, we again marched forward to Centreville. On entering this at nine or ten, P.M., the light of a thousand camp-fires shed their glow over a vast ravine, in which it was plain that the great division of the army was encamped, — forty or fifty thousand men, with batteries of artillery, baggage-wagons, &c. Here we bivouacked two nights. Dr. Josiah Curtis joined our camp here, and Mr. Henry Wilson was with us a night. At two o'clock, Sunday morning, the order to march was obeyed; and, as the mighty mass moved forward, it was manifest that the hour for the great action was near. At nine or ten, we saw, away at the south-west, clouds of smoke and dust, with plain sounds of cannon, and volleys of musketry. We hurried on, and about noon turned down into a field, where there was a creek, to rest and drink. In about two minutes, the order came to form into line, and push forward, as we were wanted. At half-past one, we were at the verge of the battle-field. As I passed, I noted a pretty large, rough-stone church, — large for Virginia, — which I decided would be one of the depots for the wounded. Curtis and I went up to the field, and there were abundant proofs of the awful work going on, — hundreds of dead men, horses dead and half killed, wounded men, in all directions. I notified all the officers of the regiment where their wounded should be carried; tried to aid some wounded, for whom I had carried my pocket full of tourniquets; but found that there was no hemorrhage. The ambulances then came up, and were heaped with wounded: no attempt could be made to separate regiments, or even friends and

enemies. Getting back to the church, I found work enough; for, in an hour, the entire floor and gallery (pews torn up) were covered with wounded to the number of seventy-five or eighty. The wounds were awfully ghastly; being made much with shell, Minie-balls, and rifled canon. We turned to with all our might (*i.e.*, Dr. Foye, myself, and Dr. Curtis, — to whose noble, fearless, volunteer devotion, too much honor cannot be given), and, until late in the afternoon, cut right hand and left hand. There were three or four other surgeons at the church; and I recollect seeing Dr. Magruder, U.S.A., who was said to have some directing power; although we all did as we saw fit.

About six o'clock, we were informed that the mighty stampede of our panic-stricken columns, flying for life, approached its end. Curtis coolly asked me if I meant to risk assassination or capture. I replied, "that in no civilized country could a surgeon be injured with his badge in sight, his hospital-flag set, and about his duty of mercy. This is our post of duty: let us stand by it." Curtis and Foye both replied, "Doctor, we shall do just as you do." We went to work again in full activity, though I was almost exhausted with fatigue. No water could be had: our dressings, chloroform, &c., were exhausted. A half-hour after, Curtis said, "Doctor, if you should decide to change your design, you have but a moment to do it in. The enemy are just upon us. In hot blood, it is not likely they will spare us." I had a young man from New Hampshire on the board laid over the chancel-rail, just having applied a tourniquet; and was about making my first incision to amputate the leg. I thought an hour in a moment. I felt I had no right to sacrifice men who thus relied upon me. I said, "Let us go!" seized my coat and sash, and we rushed out. I had my valuable horse and equipments at hand; but there was no time to save them. I lost all, — sword and belt, every surgical instrument, and some family tokens which I valued much, such as my son Samuel's (you recollect the boy) shawl and my brother James's revolver.

We rushed through a creek, and took to the woods, making a few units of that vast, dilapidated, panic-stricken mass, crowding the road for five or eight miles, every now and then alarmed by the outcry that the enemy was after us, when we would all rush out one side into the woods. A kindly cook, to whom I had shown some trifling kindness, and who had seized a horse, discovered me, and insisted on my riding, while he went on foot by my side, hurrying up

my horse. After a while, we saw a Charlestown lieutenant (Sweet) much exhausted and sick, and got him up behind me.

After riding so (and all the horses carried double; a great many of them had been cut away from the cannons) for some six or eight miles, we approached a narrow, high bridge, over "Cub Run." In an instant, the bridge was a mass of artillery, wagons, cavalry, infantry, and ambulances, crushed together. The water-way at the side was equally jammed. At this instant, the incarnate fiends fired repeated charges of their rifled canon (doubtless planted by day-light for that range) into the mass, killing many. I was a few rods from the bridge; but, on hearing the awful sounds of those missiles, I drove straight into the woods, then forward, hoping to cross the creek below. A second discharge struck the trees as if lightning had crushed them. I told Sweet we must abandon the horse. He thought so too, and slipped off, and made for the creek. At this moment, my faithful cook cried to me not to leave the horse; for that the only crossing-place possible was at the bridge. He rushed back, seized the animal, forced him over a stone wall and into the water. Here the animal insisted on stopping to drink. Cook laid over him a naked sword, which he had picked up; and one of our regiment urged him ahead with a bayonet. Just at this moment, a young negro was forced up into the deep water next the bridge, and was drowning; when cook seized him, and pitched him up upon the bank. Cook then compelled my horse to rise the almost perpendicular bank; and on we went. At the top of the hill, by a strange Providence, we again encountered Sweet, and took him on. In this way we reached Centreville, whence we had set out in such brilliant array. My cook asked me if I could ride to Washington that night. I replied, that I could do so better than the next day. We started on, I riding and he walking, Sweet left behind, until we reached Fairfax Court House. Here I spied a wretched old lager-beer wagon bound to Arlington. I deputed cook (who said he could ride the horse, beat out as he seemed to me) to hire a ride at any price, as I happened to have some money left. He agreed for ten dollars; and about eight, A.M., I reached the fortification at "Columbian Springs," opposite Washington. Here I was compelled to stay the livelong day, useless, in the rain and mud, because I could not get a pass into the city. Towards night, I persuaded the colonel in command to give me one, and reached Willard's. Here I found my servant Prentiss, whom I had directed, by a sergeant

flying to our old camps here, to bring up my baggage. I was soon dressed in clean and dry clothes, and soon encountered an old Charlestown friend (Captain Taylor, U.S.A.) there on ordnance duty. He took me to his boarding-house; and I think I must have amazed him by the way I ate, for I had seen nothing but wretched hard bread and poor coffee since we left this place. He then gave me a beautiful bed; and, having had six nights with nothing but earth and sky below and above me, I enjoyed it. Next morning, had a splendid breakfast, and bore away for Mr. William Appleton. Found him quite ill, but glad to see me, as it had been currently reported that I was among the slain. I told him some of my story, and said I wanted money. I had started with enough: but our staff and officers are very poor, as a general thing; and, having received no pay as yet, I was obliged to share with them. Of course, he put me at my ease cheerfully, and I left him happy. Got a ten-dollar gold-piece changed into quarters; and, before I got to the Surgeon-General's office to report the loss of all instruments, I met enough of our unbreakfasted stragglers to use it up. The next day (*i.e.*, yesterday), we came back here in the baggage-wagons, and are again comfortably fixed in the old Virginia mansion of which I wrote you in a former letter. To-day, our pioneers have been cutting down the large trees of the pleasure-grounds, to allow a sweep for the big guns of Fort Ellsworth. Last night, we had an alarm that the enemy was upon us. I, with some half-dozen regiments encamped round about, turned out to arms. It was, of course, a false alarm. . . .

Thus, doctor, I have given my share in those awful scenes. How much of life has been compressed in less than a month! I have seen more gun-shot wounds, performed more operations, and had a harder experience, I fancy, than most army surgeons in a lifetime.

I have enjoyed, from first to last, excellent health and spirits. I never, even when those cursed missiles were sent into my rear, felt one sentiment of regret at the step I had taken, or the slightest thought of receding. . . .

To Dr. William J. Dale.

Dr. Bell shared with his regiment the experience of various removals and camps; working with unabated zeal, and, evidently to his own surprise, enjoying, in spite of fatigue, and exposure to rough circumstances, a measure

of health which he had not known for years. He writes, Aug. 24, 1861, "My own health and spirits continue excellent. Some of my friends have prognosticated, that, when my zeal had cooled, there would be a re-action, under which I should wilt. As I never experienced any enthusiasm, of which I was conscious, beyond a plain, simple, every-day desire to discharge what seemed a duty, I never accepted their theory, and see no reason to do so now."

In this letter he announces his having learned through General Hooker, the commander of his division, his appointment as an "acting brigade-surgeon." In this, as in other parts of his correspondence, he speaks in the loftiest terms of General Hooker; admiring his manly and his military qualities. He also recognizes the personal friendliness and official courtesy which he himself receives from every one with whom he is brought in contact. On receiving official notice of his promotion in the medical service, he of course, in a letter to the State Department, resigns his commission in the Eleventh Regiment of Massachusetts. In accepting his resignation, the Governor makes a felicitous and just recognition of the fidelity and eminent quality of the patriotic and professional devotion which he had manifested. His new function, with its higher rank, was one to which Dr. Bell had every just claim; for a subordinate place, however thoroughly and faithfully he might give himself to its duties, might properly be regarded, in a relation where rank ought as nearly as possible to correspond with merit, as limiting rather than exercising his full abilities. It is evident, from frequent references to his long-expected promotion in his letters, that Dr. Bell's self-respect, and consciousness of fitness for an advanced position, made him earnest to secure it. At the same time, the same promptings restricted him to a most scrupulously dignified way of pressing his claims amid the multitude of aspirants who were moving the springs of influence at Washington. His friends to whom he

intrusted his advocacy have in their possession very striking evidences, that the first condition of honor attaching to any place that he could win, was, that it should have been honorably won. He was made acting brigade-surgeon in August, 1861; and his subsequent commission was dated from the third of that month. When Hooker was commissioned as major-general, Dr. Bell was again promoted to be "medical director of division." As such, he had under his supervision twenty-two medical officers and fifteen thousand men, scattered over a reach of six miles on the bank of the Potomac. Though it was mainly his duty to receive reports in his tent, he was in the habit of riding, on an average, a score of miles each day on visits of inspection. He acquired great skill in horsemanship over "detestable roads," which were in strange contrast with the granite highways once traversed by him as a country doctor in New Hampshire. We may be sure that he was a diligent observer of all those features of scenery, influences of climate, and various circumstances of his new mode of life, as well as of the rich and diversified manifestations of human nature opened to his intelligent and appreciative view. There are among his papers some half-dozen manuscripts of "lyceum lectures," which he had written many years ago, and delivered to great acceptance when the epidemic craving for those entertainments had spread over this neighborhood. Their subjects, never trite or commonplace, but in themselves indicative of genius, show a bent of mind adapted to the conveyance of profitable instruction in a lively way. Not the least among the regrets that he should not have been spared to see the end of the war, arises from the conviction of his friends, that he was eminently qualified to have made some valuable contribution by his pen to its literature. He prized chiefly among the prerogatives of his promotion his place on the staff of General Hooker, — of which he was the senior in rank as well as in age, — and the proximity of his tent and

the privilege of intimate intercourse with an officer, between whom and himself there grew a warm friendship, founded on mutual regard.

Dr. Bell must have been a most diligent writer of letters, even amid the distractions of a camp and the deprivation of ordinary conveniences. A large number of epistles, of great variety in form and contents, are now before me, addressed by him to his children. He exacted from them all, in person or by proxy, constant communications covering the affairs of home-life and their education. He set them the example of fidelity in this direction by an almost daily message from his pen. These letters of his are crowded with the proofs of his wise affection; of his resolution to keep strong every tie of love, as a medium of tender regard, and of constant influence in the formation of his children's characters; and of his desire to communicate to them a conception of the nature of that struggle in which their father was daily risking his life. There is a vivacity in their tone and contents, such as make them the channels of lively amusement as well as of information. He tells the story of a valuable horse lost in the rout at Bull Run, and of his efforts to replace him; and describes the tricks and short-comings of his new steed, which, though heinous and dangerous, were offset by the evidence of some undeveloped or untrained qualities of good and by some positive merits. The medical director does not fail to recognize the fact, that horses as well as men are affected by change of climate. As the damps and chills of autumn drew on, instead of allowing his horse to be tethered, as hundreds around him were, in the open night-air, he is careful to procure him a warm board shelter, while the owner sleeps under canvas only. He describes to his children the two costumes in which their father appears at different times, — one an undress of most primitive and scanty materials, in which he runs down to a clay puddle, with a towel in his hand, for ablutions; the other, in which, tricked with

stripes on his pantaloons, gold lace, epaulets, and a chapeau, he mounts his horse as a fierce warrior. His skill in draughting and caricature-etching serves him and his correspondents to good purpose here. He draws a sketch of his tent, as seen from outside; and another, as disposed within, describing its parts and uses. One of these letters, dated "Away off five hundred miles from my infantines," addressed to his youngest boy, covers three pages printed by the pen with great beauty and regularity, so that the child may be able to read it as his own. It is adorned with an admirable sketch of a "contraband," — being a "side-view of Cupid, waiter to the mess," — preceded by an escort of very small chickens of a rather pensive expression. Some, who knew Dr. Bell in quite other relations, would hardly have recognized his identity, had they looked over his shoulder as he was engaged upon such an illustrated epistle, in a tent surrounded with clay a foot deep, and of a consistency which suggested brick-making.

In January, 1862, Congress had before it a bill providing for a re-organization of the medical department of the army. The brigade-surgeons, in which class Dr. Bell stood as No. 10, were to be merged with the surgeons of the regular army: and certain "inspectors" were provided for, with rank and emoluments a little higher; their duties being to exercise a supervision over the hospitals, the hygiene regulations, &c. Dr. Bell proposed applying for one of these places; feeling confident that his pursuits and studies would make him more useful in such a position than in the ordinary line of duty. He well knew how earnest would be the struggle between competitors and their patrons in the political arena for these coveted places. He might be excused from all imputation of vanity or over self-estimate, if he had quietly assumed, that, were the question to turn simply upon an ordeal or inquisition that should proceed upon the fitness of candidates, one of the places would have sought him, without any effort of his own.

He was well aware, however, that circumstances required him to stand as his own friend, and to rally others. Yet, as before, there was only one way in which he could seek or use patronage. It must come to him, if at all, from competent men, his own neighbors, through direct channels, and with the sanction of the highest professional authority. The last interest, as it proved, which he had to engage his thoughts and feelings, apart from filling the range of his duties where he served, was given to this object. He sent to Massachusetts for proper testimonials for his fitness for one of the new "inspectorships." In two letters before me, the last which I received from him, he makes known his wishes, and indicates the way in which he would be aided. He did not decline having signatures set to his application by men holding political places. He had many warm friends among them, and they were ready to advance his purposes. "But," he writes, "it seems to me, that, for an office requiring capacity for such duties and trusts as those suggested, if offices are ever bestowed because of fitness, the appointing power should have the testimonials of some other than political names. I should be glad at least to offer something different," &c.

He proceeds to express, in a modest and diffident way, his preference for such support as he would derive from the testimonials of some of his associates in the societies of which he was a member. Such testimonials were most gratefully furnished him, and a professional man might well take pride in offering them on his own behalf. Among the signatures on one of the papers is that of Hon. William Appleton. Not satisfied with putting his name on a list with those of others, he felt that the relations in which he had stood for so many years with Dr. Bell warranted a special attestation. Mr. Appleton, therefore, paid the candidate this tribute: "I am not satisfied with simply signing the annexed; but will add, that I, for many years, was intimately acquainted with Dr. Bell while I was acting as president and trustee in the M'Lean

Asylum. I do not, nor did I ever, know the man I could so highly recommend for the office asked for."

The most eminent members of the Massachusetts Medical Society and the Medical Faculty of Harvard University united in a special testimonial to the President of the United States and the Secretary of War in his behalf. The papers reached him on the day preceding his fatal illness. They were found among his files, and bear his indorsement. If they served no other use to him, they must at least have afforded him a generous gratification. Providence had appointed that they should have no occasion to test their efficiency with those who dispense places of public trust and emolument; but they were a fitting expression to the receiver of them, in his last days, of the high personal and professional estimation in which he was held by those who could put their names to such terms of confidence only in behalf of one whom they knew to be fully worthy. It is pleasant to think of our departed associate as enjoying in this form the last sympathetic pleasure of communion with many of his warmest friends at a distance from the scene where he was soon to loose his hold upon life.*

In one of these two letters, whose main purport has just been referred to, Dr. Bell adds something concerning himself, especially confident as regards his health. Its date is Jan. 13, 1862, — less than a month previous to his decease.

"It is some seven months since I left my home at what I then regarded, and still regard, to have been the call of duty. I have successively passed through the posts of regimental surgeon, brigade surgeon, and my present place. I have seen a vast amount of malarial disease; and the whole volume of military surgery was opened

* The writer's eye falls upon a casually written sentence of his own, in a note dated Feb. 1, accompanying the transmission of certain papers to Dr. Bell, as follows: "So many of those who have signed your papers have asked me to convey to you their best wishes, that you must regard the enclosed fully as much in the light of a greeting to yourself as in that of an appeal to authorities."

before me one Sunday afternoon, — July 21, — with illustrations horrid and sanguinary. 'Sudley Church,' with its hundred wounded victims, will form a picture in my sick dreams so long as I live. I never have spent but one night out of camp since I came into it; and a bed and myself have been practically strangers these seven months. Yet I never have yet had one beginning of a regret at my decision to devote what may be left of life and ability to the great cause. I have, as you know, four motherless children. Painful as it is to leave such a charge, even in the worthiest hands, I have forced myself into reconciliation by the reflection, that the great issue under the stern arbitrament of arms is, whether or not our children are to have a country. My own health and strength have amazed me. I have recalled a hundred times your remark, that 'a man's lungs are the strongest part of him.' It has so proved with me. Had I another page, I should run on into a narrative of my exploits in horseback excursions, reviews, &c.; which sometimes make me question, whether, in the language of our 'spiritualistic' friends, I have not '*left the form*,' and certainly I have entered on another '*sphere*.'

"The general in whose staff it is my happiness to serve fills my highest idea of what a general officer should be. He was through the Florida and Mexican wars, and is said to have been 'more times under fire' than any officer in the service. He is under fifty, of splendid person, never had a sick day, and is a 'model man' as to every high-bred and generous trait. He has the confidence of all who have been with him through the summer to this time."

The last letter which Dr. Bell wrote was addressed to his friend Dr. J. W. Bemis, of Charlestown, and bears date Feb. 4, 1862, — the day preceding the night when fatal disease came upon him. In this letter he writes, "I have no point fixed in my calculations for a visit homeward, beyond the idea, that if we prevail in the grand conflict on the other side, which all anticipate, I might, after the wreck is cleared off, solicit a month's leave of absence; but I do not contemplate leaving the service (health of myself and children continuing) until this wicked Rebellion is for ever quelled." Thus his hope for the nation, and his self-devotion to insure its fulfilment, animated him to the last.

He retired that night in his usual health, save that he felt slightly the symptoms of a cold. His attendant, Prentiss, who had been for many years one of the most efficient servants in the Asylum, and in whose intelligence and fidelity Dr. Bell reposed great confidence, — sharing his tent with him, — rose long before daylight to write a letter. About four o'clock on the wintry morning of Feb. 5, under his canvas shelter at Camp Baker, two miles from Budd's Ferry, on the Potomac, Dr. Bell very suddenly announced to him that he was suffering in most severe distress, and must die if not soon relieved. He directed Prentiss to administer chloroform to him. His pain was in the lumbar region, and was so excruciating, that Dr. Bell was from the first convinced that his death was inevitable. He said he had never in his life before known what pain was. Prentiss proposed to go for Surgeon Foye, Dr. Bell's former assistant in the Eleventh Massachusetts Regiment. "No," said the sufferer: "you can do for me all that any one can." To the further entreaty of his attendant, pleading that he did not like to be alone with him while he was in such distress, Dr. Bell gave him permission to send for the surgeon. His pains continued for the six following days, and were made endurable only through the constant use of chloroform. On Tuesday, Feb. 11, his disease had reached the vital parts, and resulted in metastasis. The patient retained his full consciousness, and saw the end of earth close upon him. He calmly directed to whom telegrams should be transmitted as soon as he had ceased to live. In the afternoon, General Hooker and staff were present in the tent, and showed their profound respect and sympathy for the sufferer. The Rev. Henry E. Parker, chaplain of the Second Regiment of New-Hampshire Volunteers, — to whom, as a true-hearted Christian and a most admired preacher, Dr. Bell often refers in his letters with warm approbation, — was with him for nearly two hours. He conversed freely on the subject of the great change awaiting him, and upon his religious

hopes. He closed the conversation by stretching out his arm, taking hold of Mr. Parker's hand, and saying, "Now one word of prayer." Surrounded by this group of friends, he calmly drew his last breath about nine o'clock in the evening.

His remains were transported homewards under the charge of Chaplain Parker, and rested for a while in the library-room of his dwelling in Charlestown. Monday, Feb. 17, was appointed for his funeral. His body — the casket containing it being draped with his country's flag, and not without the gentle adorning of flowers — was followed by a long procession to St. John's Church, Charlestown. Many distinguished and honored men had gathered there; and friends and citizens, crowding the edifice, all united in their silent tribute of grateful respect to one who had crowned a well-spent and most devoted life by a peaceful death in the service of his country in its crisis of trial. The burial-rites of the church were conducted by the rector, Rev. T. R. Lambert; and a brief commemorative address was made by the writer. The remains were interred at Mount Auburn. His life closed soon after he had entered upon his fifty-sixth year.

Doubtless his one last earthly wish, not realized, would have been to have spoken his last words to his children. With only that one natural yearning of heart ungratified, the circumstances of his decease were in harmony with the tenor of his life, and must have been made familiar to his contemplations as not only possible, but probable. He had lived longer than his reasonable anxieties had assigned as the span of his existence. His infirmities for the last seven years of his life, not exercising him with much severity of pain, had deepened the natural contemplativeness of his temperament, and allowed him to cast upon the problems of existence a study which is more searching and discerning than philosophy. He realized, if any man ever did, the length and depth, the sweep and compass, of the shadows which are thrown over

human life. Materialism was no solution of those problems for him; nor was science the highest light or guide which he recognized. The unknown was always, in its volume and its significance, the ocean of infinite possibilities and of transcendent realities to him. He had well learned the lesson commended by the highest sage of antiquity, — that the limitations of man's range and understanding divest even his best knowledge of all completeness and certainty.

There is something whose suggestiveness is measured only by one's imaginative or appreciative powers for pursuing it, in contemplating the life-work of a man whose professional career was so peculiar as that of Dr. Bell. Any individual in the ordinary circumstances of life, who has had occasion to recognize the fact, knows that no more severe exaction could be made upon his judgment, his patience, or his affections, than would be called for in the wise and proper management of a single person suffering under mental malady. Never are the most intelligent and well-informed, and the capable for all other exigencies, so instantly and consciously driven to their own "wits' end" as when called upon to use their own "wits" as a substitute for those of another. The timid fear that they may catch the malady; the discreet are apprehensive, that, even with the best intentions, they may confirm and aggravate it. The responsible head of an insane asylum is thoroughly educated in a lesson which has its most perfect illustration there, though familiar by other applications of it in the home, the school, and the fields of politics, — that, the less wise or reasonable the subjects of any man's oversight or sympathy, the more wise and reasonable must he be in order to discharge his trust. There probably are not less than five thousand legal voters in this Commonwealth who would feel no sense of unfitness for, or indisposition to accept the office of, its Governor, after having encountered the first slight surprise of being nominated for it. But it is not likely that there are as many scores of persons who would hesitate in

avowing, not only their present incompetence, but even the impossibility of their ever qualifying themselves, for the guardianship and the relief of those mentally diseased. When we summon before us the three thousand patients to whom, for longer or shorter periods, Dr. Bell ministered, we realize at once that some of the conditions of his service utterly excluded the facility which is acquired in any merely routine work. Of course, he has much to say in his reports about the "classification" of patients. But he found that the most elaborate or the most simple classification still left a specific peculiarity attaching to every case. He had to do with individuals as such, and not with groups. Every conceivable type and phase of mental malady presented itself before him in the course of his career; and he found that there was a possibility of infinite combinations of simple morbid symptoms. Cases of disease which manifested the least in amount of mere aberration, and which would have been regarded by one not an expert as the easiest to be dealt with, did, in fact, make the heaviest requisitions upon his science and skill.

That he could put himself in communication with so many disordered minds in a way to win confidence, and to any hopeful purpose, — standing as he did, before the majority of the sufferers, as representing both the restraint which isolated them from home and liberty, and also the friend on whose skill and kindness they must depend for relief, — proves that he had qualities of mind and character rarely found together. No detail of particulars could add to the moral impression of that fact, taken in its completeness. He had to be the confidant of many secrets of heart and life that were willingly revealed, and to penetrate to many more that were disclosed simply by the over-jealousy and watchfulness which guarded them. That Dr. Bell could retain the exercise of his own heathful mental faculties during all this experience, was all but marvellous. Retaining their health, it was but natural that he should sharpen, stimulate, and increase the vigor of

those faculties. He was wont to say to his intimate friends, that the severest demands made upon all his resources, especially those of tenderness, sympathy, and heart-learning, were engaged by that large, but by no means homogeneous class of patients whose mental infirmities or delusions were connected with religion. He had to be a master of the "inner philosophy" to communicate with such patients. Any harsh or unsympathetic, any impatient or unskilled, dealing with their scruples or fancies, their diseased sensibilities, or their occasionally almost inspired hallucinations and rhapsodies, would have thrown a barrier between him and them, which, once there, would be likely to be permanent. How far to indulge, and when to prohibit, the free outpourings of the sensibilities of his patients, was a difficult question, whose wise decision, in each case, was sure to require in their guardian an appreciation of all that is healthful, as well as a discrimination of all that is morbid, in the workings of the religious element of human nature. These qualifications, which are the finest results of spiritual insight and true culture in the professional divine, are indispensable in the effective administration of an asylum, in which the consciences and spirits of its inmates are often more grievously burdened by compunctions for imaginary sins, than are those of the physically healthful out of doors for actual guilt of the real offences.

In reviewing Dr. Bell's professional career for the purpose of drawing from it an estimate of his talents, attainments, and character, the above hints must be accepted in place of any fuller attempt to delineate him. His last claim upon our respectful and grateful tribute addresses us through that self-offering, in the spirit of pure patriotism, which closed his mortal life. As these lines are written, the cause to which he gave himself with such entire devotion still suspends its issue. The hope and confidence that never failed in the heart of this not the least distinguished and beloved among the many noble and good whom it has already claimed as its vic-

tims, still keeps alive in patriot hearts the same full assurance of success. It is not, then, in forgetfulness or depreciation of the soldierly qualities and services manifested by the subject of this Memoir, that the writer shrinks from closing it with a reference to the occasion in which he closed his life. That was simply an emergent occasion, a surprise, an uncongenial occupation in most of its conditions, even to one whom it found so ready to meet them. Our last words concerning him should recognize him as nobly and faithfully, with consummate ability and a well-crowned success, discharging for a score of years one of the most exacting tasks required of the professional man and the Christian. There are words already in print better than the writer can choose or fill with meaning for that purpose.

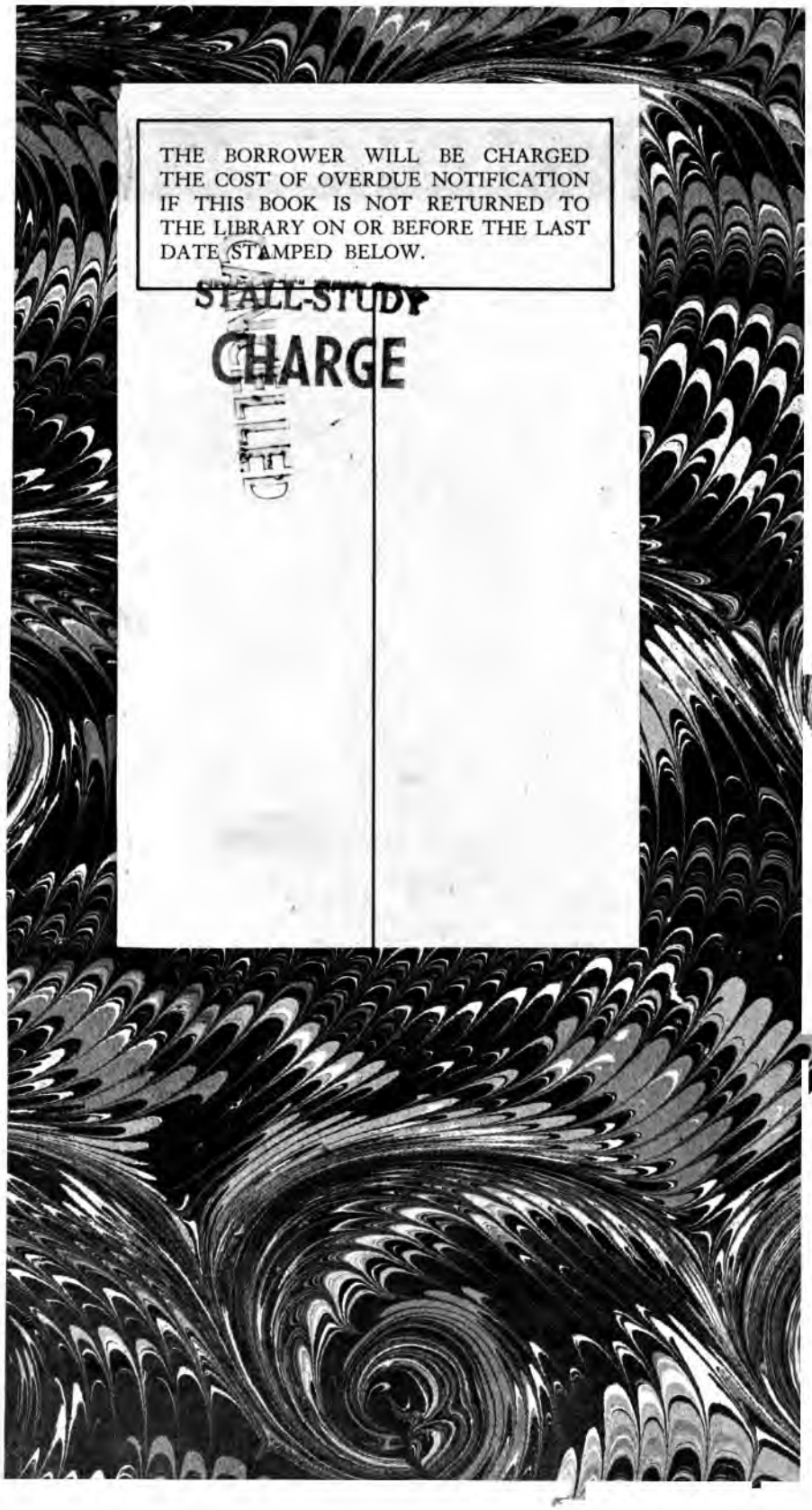
The following tribute was paid to Dr. Bell by Dr. John E. Tyler, his honored and accomplished successor in the Asylum at Somerville. The extract closes his Report to the Trustees, dated Jan. 1, 1863. The reference to Mr. Appleton has a peculiar appropriateness, as he died while the remains of Dr. Bell were awaiting burial.

"Seldom does there come to any institution, in the experience of a single year, so sad a duty as that of chronicling the decease of two such men as the Hon. William Appleton and Dr. Luther V Bell. They were long and most harmoniously associated as officers of this institution, and were borne to their last resting-place within a few days of each other. . . .

"For nearly twenty years, Dr. Bell held the position of Superintendent of the Asylum, identifying himself with all its interests, and directing its daily management with a comprehensive skill, sagacity and forecast, a purity and elevation of purpose, and a scrupulous faithfulness to every relation involved, which secured for him, for those intrusted to his care, and for the institution, the happiest and the most abundant results. The accuracy and variety of his knowledge, the soundness of his judgment, and his remarkable faculty of adapting means to ends, meet one here at every step; while the recognized method of treatment, the traditionary usages and rules of the

house, bear the indelible stamp of his thorough and exact comprehension of the needs of the insane, and his wonderful tact in providing for them. His active and commanding intellect; his extraordinary attainments as a scholar, philosopher, and psychologist; his extensive knowledge of every thing pertaining to the phenomena, management, and history of insanity; his able and long-continued efforts, and success, in diffusing and establishing correct views of the nature and treatment of the disease, — have justly caused him to be regarded as one of the most distinguished of the many great men who have ever adorned the medical profession. His inbred sense of honor; his entire removal from all meanness and duplicity; his sterling integrity and inflexible moral courage; his keen sense and ardent love of right, leading him to its defence, in utter disregard of any personal consideration and in the face of any obstacle, and qualifying and inspiring all his every-day life, and yet with no touch of pharisaical exactness or pretension, — commanded the admiration and respect of all who knew him, and gave him an uncommon power of personal influence, while it made him of inestimable worth as a friend. His courteous and dignified bearing, his gentle manner and quiet humor, his inexhaustible store of anecdote and useful information, gave him a wonderful charm as a companion. Strong, though not demonstrative, in his feeling, warm in his attachments, he loved his home, his friends, and his daily associations, and devoted himself to their welfare. He loved his country, and felt the severity of her fiery trial; and faithful as always to his convictions of right, and personal obligation, he gave her as his last offering the rich accumulation of his experience, and his life; a brilliant example of lofty Christian patriotism.

"The influence of such men does not die when they step from the earth. 'They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.'"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